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MEMOIRS
OF A PICTURE:

CONTAINING

THE ADVENTURES OF MANY CONSPICUOUS CHARACTERS,

And interspersed with a variety

OF AMUSING ANECDOTES OF SEVERAL VERY EXTRAORDINARY PERSONAGES CONNECTED WITH THE ARTS;

Including

A genuine Biographical Sketch of that celebrated original and eccentric Genius,

The late

MR. GEORGE MORLAND.

Drawn from the tolerably authentic source of more than twenty years' intimate acquaintance with him, his family, and connections.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A COPIOUS APPENDIX,

Embracing every interesting subject relative to our justly admired English Painter, and his most valuable works.

BY WILLIAM COLLINS,

Author of the Slave Trade, a Poem; an Ode to Sir Jeffery Dunstan, an Heroic Effusion; with several detached Pieces in Prose and Verse; several of which have appeared in most of the public Papers, under various signatures, since the Year 1788, to the present Period.

There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which taken at the flood leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life,
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.

Shakespeare's Julius Cæsar, Act IV. *Scene* 3.

VOL. III.

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CONTENTS.

VOLUME III.

CHAPTER I.

THE painter, returning from the pawnbroker, meets his benefactor—Confusion and regret for what he had done—The captain repairs to Gripus, who is no Jew, farther than in principle, and terrifies him into a resignation of the picture, &c. . . . . Page 1

CHAPTER II.

The mutual joy of the lovers at so unexpected a meeting—Sketch of the history of Miss Becket, afterwards the celebrated Lady B——, and her lover, the Earl of B——, in which is a continuation of the earl's story and family—Anecdotes of Lady Rachel and the handsome footman . . . . . Page 9

CHAPTER III.

An accident no way uncommon, which leads to the gratification of female curiosity—Attention of the Becket

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family to the ease of the young stranger—Mr. Becket alarmed at the accident, being nothing but a conspiracy to rob him, &c. . . . . Page 25

CHAPTER IV.

The two ladies pay a morning visit to the lawyer's beautiful daughter, and are surprised at the lustre of her charms—They acquaint her of her conquest, and its effects, and prevail on her to visit the unfortunate youth—She repeats her visits, but is still deaf to the voice of love—The earl becomes acquainted with his son's meanness, &c. . . . . Page 35

CHAPTER V.

Lady B—— presents her noble consort with a boy—Not permitted to be a cement of such a union—Dies soon after—Peevishness of the earl towards his wife—Her fashionable indifference—Suspicious conduct—Consequences thereof . . . . . Page 44

CHAPTER VI.

Forlorn condition of the portrait-painter—Is generously relieved by the well-timed bounty of Captain S——, his friend—Delicate and noble manner of assisting the distressed, without wounding their feelings—Tour to the Continent, and politeness of a foreign nobleman to the English travellers, &c. . . . . Page 59

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CHAPTER VII.

Containing matters of high and low consideration—a providential escape from fire; and the loss of the picture . . . . . Page 69

CHAPTER VIII.

The difference between rage and courage exemplified, and the consequence—The generous conduct of Lady B——; with other matters of less importance Page 85

CHAPTER IX.

The little vengeance of a great man—The speedy issue of a legal proceeding—and the fortunate discovery of the much-regretted picture . . . . . Page 105

CHAPTER X.

Containing several instances of the knowledge and address of some profound judges of the fine arts, and original anecdotes of Des-ohong-fong, a Chinese adept, and one of the ambassadors to the Great Mogul, and his friend, Chevalier Maguilph . . . . . Page 122

CHAPTER XI.

General reflections upon the subject of the fine arts—The arrogance of those who assume the office of censors

Digitized by Google

seurs—The fallibility of such judges exemplified—and the harvest reaped by adventurers, and picture-dealers, from that prolific source . . . . . Page 146

CHAPTER XII.

Arrival in England of the Chinese adept, Des-chong-fong, and his friend, Chevalier Sir Theodore Maguilph, with their unrivalled collection of pictures—Their industry in discovering the retreat of the chef-d'œuvre of Guido . . . . . Page 166

CHAPTER XIII.

The hair-breadth escape of the chevalier from the ponderous shackles of Hymen, and some interesting anecdotes of Miss Sophia . . . . . Page 182

CHAPTER XIV.

The consequence of the knight's declining the honour of Miss Sophia's hand, and the prudent conduct of her brother upon this occasion—Envy of Mrs. Scumble upon being informed of the new Gallery about to be opened by his foreign brethren, Sir Theodore and his friend, Page 206

CHAPTER XV.

Wherein is a faithful relation of the sad disappointment the illustrious foreigners experienced, in the promised satisfaction they were to have received from the

Digitized by Google

jurisprudence of the country, by the singular conduct of the attornies employed in the cause . . . Page 217

CHAPTER XVI.

The scene changes from harmony to riot and confusion, which terminates in a bloody fray . . Page 227

CHAPTER XVII.

Preparations for renewing legal hostilities—Determination of the partners to prosecute with the utmost rigour—Their disappointment arising from want of their chief evidence, though a dumb one—Loss of their celebrated picture . . . . . Page 237

CHAPTER XVIII.

Of the measures taken for the recovery of the picture—Anecdotes of plebeian picture-dealers—Gross ignorance of the arts in a dealer generally compensated by the number of customers it seldom fails to attract . . . . . Page 248

CHAPTER XIX.

Of the mistakes occasioned by the appearance of a picture bearing so strong a kindred resemblance to the one stolen, as to pass not only for a twin relative, but the very identical gem belonging to his excellency Deschong-fong, &c. . . . . Page 270

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CHAPTER XX.

Mr. Bidfair, the Liverpool dealer, returns home—Consults his townsman, Captain Boardall, respecting the pictures bought of him—Adventures of Mademoiselle Julia St. Prieux and Mr. Glazetint, the celebrated Flemish copyist . . . . . Page 287

CHAPTER XXI.

Conclusion of the story of Mademoiselle Julia St. Prieux, and Rembrandt Glazetint, the celebrated Flemish copyist . . . . . Page 290

CHAPTER XXII.

Conclusion of the adventures of Lady B——, and her lover, Captain S——. Singular gratitude of their friend, Mr. Carmine the portrait-painter.—Death of lawyer Becket.—Lady B——'s agreeable transition, from dependence and a prison, to wealth and liberty, by that event.—The melancholy fate which succeeds this dream of happiness, in consequence of the loss of her favourite . . . . . Page 311

CHAPTER XXIII.

Mr. Bidfair enters an action against the partners in the new picture firm—Their determination to abide the issue, when an extraordinary event occasions an alteration in their opinion . . . . . Page 321

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Memoirs of a Picture.

CHAP. I.

THE PAINTER, RETURNING FROM THE PAWN-BROKER, MEETS HIS BENEFACTOR—CONFUSION AND REGRET FOR WHAT HE HAD DONE—THE CAPTAIN REPAIRS TO GRIPUS, WHO IS NO JEW, FARTHER THAN IN PRINCIPLE, AND TERRIFIES HIM INTO A RESIGNATION OF THE PICTURE, &c.

BEFORE the painter left his duplicate-banker, he was assured by the latter, that he would endeavour to manage matters so as not to be shuffled out of the reward offered, which he said the knowing ones of the town were too apt to do; he therefore appointed the next morning for a final adjustment of their plan.

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Our painter returning home from this eventful interview, met his benefactor; and then for the first time a sudden reflection upon the error of his conduct filled him with shame and contrition. His confusion was in fact so manifest, that the gentleman of the road asked him jocularly, if he was under any alarm from thus meeting him? Declaring if it even was a time and place to do business, he was the last person he should expect to produce a shilling to save his life with. This reflection upon the poverty of the painter, although in jest, being only one of a dozen he was accustomed to almost every night in the year, seemed now to increase his confusion. He therefore made one effort to redeem his credit with a friend, and gave him an ample confession of his imprudence in confiding his secret to such an hypocritical usurer, who would have hanged half his own kindred for a quarter per cent. and the other half to procure a vacant magistrate's chair at Bow Street, to which dignity he had long looked up; but from motives widely different from those of dispensing justice.

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However disposed the captain was to excuse the fault of his friend, who pleaded all the circumstances of his repeated disappointments and consequent misery, he was determined to wait for no farther apologies; and seeing there was no time to be lost, went directly with the painter to his abode of miserable wretchedness; where, giving him a lesson for his future conduct, and taking the duplicate, desired he might see him at the usual rendezvous at night; and then posted off immediately for the high priest of Mammon's temple.

When he arrived, Mr. Levi was just stepping out about a little business at Bow Street; but, knowing the consequence of his customer who was thus unexpectedly come, he politely shewed him the way in, because, as the captain had been rather a stranger of late, it was possible, Mr. Levi thought, he might have forgotten the way. He therefore ushered the man of war into the parlour, and then begged to know his business. The captain produced the ticket of the picture, and pulling out his purse, laid it upon

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the table, ready to satisfy the conscientious demand of old Gripus. But the other gravely told him, that as the picture was not come honestly by, it behoved him, as a man of character, to give immediate notice of it at Bow Street, whither he was proceeding the moment he met his old acquaintance.

The captain, who knew his man too well to believe him, even upon his oath, flatly contradicted him, respecting his errand to Bow Street; and told him in plain terms, that he need not flatter himself with the hope of cheating the poor painter out of the reward advertised for the picture; as he had been at the coffee-house with him, and settled the business. And as to character, it was true, every body allowed that to be pretty notorious, ever since the execution of the poor youth that he encouraged to rob his master. This was more than the enraged Levite could, or was prepared to bear; he therefore taxed the captain with an affair upon the road, which his enemies had done him the honour of ascribing to his prowess;

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and threatened to have him apprehended directly. For which purpose he was making towards the door, which the captain put his foot against and locked; then taking a pistol from his pocket, he clapped the muzzle almost into the mouth of the terrified usurer, swearing if he made the least noise or outcry to endanger his liberty, he would that instant dismiss the hypocritical soul from his unwieldy contaminated carcase: and that, after he had told him a secret, he should be at liberty to go and give what information he thought proper; but, that at all events, he must give up the picture, for which he meant to pay him both principal and interest.

The old wretch was too happy in having the weapon of destruction removed from his cadaverous lips upon any condition, and therefore swore to any thing the other dictated. The captain then proceeded to let him know, that he had lately taken in pawn, from a lady well known about the garden, a quantity of jewels, pearls, and other valuable articles, to the amount of

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three thousand pounds at least; well knowing them to have been stolen from a celebrated French courtezan; and upon which property he had liberally advanced one hundred and fifty pounds, which transaction alone was enough to entitle him to the distinguished rank he held amongst the various tribes at Duke's Place. For although not a member of any circumcised nation or tribe, they all yielded the palm to him for every species of the most unfeeling avarice, and destructive usury.

All this, however, old Two-to-one knew full as well as the captain, who proceeded to inform him of what he did not know, in addition; namely, that the uncle of the unfortunate youth, whom he was the chief instrument of bringing to a shameful death, had told him, that his nephew confided to him, the uncle, in his last moments, the secret, that not one half of the property he stole from his master was yet recovered. And that he had given him a list of the several articles now in Levi's possession; and all this he was determined to prove for the

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public welfare, in ridding society of such a pest, who had richly merited the gallows every day, for the last thirty years of his villainous life.

"And now," continued the hero of the road, "I leave you to choose between a condemned cell in Newgate, or the luxury of one of your own best apartments." Thus saying, he returned the pistol into his pocket, unlocked the door, and pretended to be going; when the old fox altered his tone, and in the most abject terms begged for a reconciliation, and as a proof of his sincerity immediately gave up the picture. But so powerful is habit, that he hugged himself after all his terror and confusion were over, for having it still in his power to do the captain, and he accordingly cheated him of three-pence halfpenny in the interest.

This affair, which at first portended so much danger to the poor painter and his friend, was thus happily adjusted; and the picture once more came into the posses-

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sion of this hitherto fortunate son of rapine; who very prudently determined to send it, as soon as possible, by some trusty messenger to claim the reward, every penny of which he meant to share with the distressed knight of the palette.

Agreeably to this laudable resolution, as he was proceeding along the Strand towards the dwelling of the said portrait-painter, he heard his name repeated by a female voice; and presently a hackney-coach stopped just before him. In which vehicle, what was his surprise, when he found the beautiful and accomplished Lady B—, formerly the celebrated Miss Harriet Becket, only daughter of the rich old attorney of —— inn: who, in point of usurious transactions, was little inferior to *Hater Levi*, of notorious pawnbroking memory, just mentioned.

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CHAP. II.

THE MUTUAL JOY OF THE LOVERS AT SO UNEXPECTED A MEETING—SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF MISS BECKET, AFTERWARDS THE CELEBRATED LADY B—, AND HER LOVER, THE EARL, OF B—, IN WHICH IS A CONTINUATION OF THE EARL'S STORY AND FAMILY—ANECDOTES OF LADY RACHEL AND THE HANDSOME FOOTMAN.

OUR hero was quite overjoyed upon opening the coach, to find a beloved acquaintance, and the only one of a number he was ever sincerely attached to; for, like his great predecessor Macheath, no man of his day was more generally admired by a certain description of ladies, than the gallant Captain S——. The surprise and joy of this unexpected meeting was therefore

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mutual; and after the first transports of that had subsided, each was anxious to hear what had occurred to the other since their last parting. For this purpose the lady ordered the coachman to turn about, and set her down where he came from, at her own house, in Upper Norton Street, from whence she was proceeding to the exhibition at Somerset-House, when she was so happy as to recognise her dear captain. Having arrived at the lady's elegant habitation, we shall there leave them to satisfy the curiosity of each other, whilst we present our readers with a faithful sketch of the origin of the celebrated Miss Harriet Becket; a lady in several respects worthy of the good fortune her beauty and accomplishments procured her, and which we lament was not as permanent as it was unexpected.

Miss Becket was the daughter of an attorney whose practice was pretty extensive, though his enemies did not scruple to assert, that he gained most of his wealth by a species of business neither so produc-

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tive nor reputable in these our happily reformed times. In short, he was called a pettifogger in the strictest meaning of that opprobrious term; for there was no job so mean, or action for any sum so trivial, that he would not undertake provided there was a certainty of its yielding a single half-guinea. But his most profitable and real line of practice was chiefly in conveyancing, discounting bills at a short date, provided they had not less than four names upon the back, and other such honourable means as no gentleman of the profession need *then* be ashamed of.

In consequence of great application to his business, Mr. Becket, in the course of twenty years' drudgery, acquired enough to support a very handsome equipage, with a town and country-house; servants, and all the necessary appendages of a fashionable appointment. Miss Harriet being his only surviving child, no pains were spared to give her a polished education. Masters of the first eminence in their several departments were engaged for this purpose, and

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under their auspices, being a very apt child, she acquired a surprising proficiency in music, dancing, and drawing, before she had completed her fifteenth year.

It is no wonder then that Harriet, possessing such talents, and being an only child, should be the darling of her parents; and in fact her mamma almost idolised her; and if the house was ever honoured with a visit by any of the neighbouring gentry, she alone was the cause. For the old adage was verified to a tittle in the old lawyer's case, respecting the effects of a bad name, since scarcely any person of character would visit at his house, notwithstanding his great wealth. So powerful is prejudice, and so difficult is it to root out from the mind the sayings of him they of old called wise, who very unlike a modern Jew declares, "a good name to be preferable to riches." But what neither riches, nor even a good name can sometimes effect, was at this period brought about by a very natural cause wholly, which in the issue produced a very singular alteration in one of the best

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families in the neighbourhood of ——; as almost every person that made use of their eyes could very readily account for.

Now this was neither more nor less than the ripening charms of the blooming Harriet who had now attained her seventeenth year. But from the retired manner in which the family had hitherto lived, she had never received that homage which was so justly her due, not more for the beauty of her form, than her various accomplishments. A pen-and-ink sketch, as a copy of the first, we shall here attempt, without a hope of being able to do justice to the original.

Her stature was something above the middle size, and so justly proportioned, that she was in truth a model of feminine symmetry equal to any of the beautiful sex we have ever yet seen. But if her person was thus rendered attractive by all the graces that border upon perfection, nature was equally lavish in adorning one of the most perfect outlines of an elegant oval

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face, the complexion of which was one ravishing composition of health, love, and beauty. And what added lustre to this delightful countenance, was one of the loveliest heads of auburn hair that ever graced a bewitchingly tapered neck with fascinating ringlets formed by the genial hand of nature alone. And when we add, that the soul-enchanting brightness of two dark hazel eyes could only be equalled by a double row of teeth that mocked the utmost polish art could ever yet impart to the whitest ivory, the reader may be enabled to fancy some conception of their beauty; and her sweet pouting lips of purest vermillion, which ever and anon opened to display them, or shut to conceal some of the many charms that might overpower the beholder. We shall then have given our readers some tolerable idea of Miss Harriet Becket, whose lovely bosom, as no words are adequate to convey a just portrait of, we shall refer them to the highest pitch that imagination can reach of all that is desirable in the fairest of nature's lovely works. And then, if in several

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efforts they can succeed in fancying any thing half so attracting, we shall congratulate them upon their exquisite taste.

About two miles distant from Mr. Becket's lived the Earl of B—, whose family consisted of a maiden sister, one charming daughter, and a fine young man, then upon his travels. Lady B— had been dead more than seven years, and her lord had remained a widower, being at the period we now speak of in his fiftieth year; of a good constitution, a very fine person, and possessing every requisite accomplishment that can adorn the man of fashion. The understanding of this nobleman was clear and comprehensive, had been sufficiently cultivated at one of the first universities in the country, where he acquired a competent knowledge of ancient literature; but with all these advantages, he had a certain hauteur in his manner, that, like an ungracious cloud lowering between us and the sun, obscured all his fine qualities. This originated in his lofty notions of noble birth, which, in spite of his superior understand-

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ing, would sometimes lead him into the greatest absurdities.

The constitution of the earl was rather amorous; and it must be confessed, that on many tender occasions, his family pride, however ridiculous on others, was in his intercourse with the fair of considerable use to him. To this cause his most intimate friends attributed his remaining so long a widower; and to say the truth, they were tolerably accurate in their conjectures. But as Nature is a kind parent, it must sometimes give her pain to behold one of her children assume the mastery, and disdain to hold any social intercourse with the rest of his brethren. Now, when this happens, as it frequently does, we see what pains she hath often been at to recal such spoiled children to a proper sense of their true origin and duty. And though this maternal task she often performs in a very whimsical manner, the effect is, in the end, nearly uniform; as we all generally return to her bosom as like one another as possible.

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This nobleman was, not very long since, a living instance of the truth of these remarks; and very few indeed of the children of our kind dame Nature ever took more pains to forget his parent, and kindred, and resist her operations. It was therefore a matter of course, that the family of old Lawyer Becket was considered by him as but one small remove from the canaille, and just of consequence enough to be honoured with his contempt. This proud nobleman's amiable daughter, however, was of opinions directly opposite to her lordly parent; and she was such a true child of nature, as to feel, and even sympathise, with the meanest domestic who happened to be ill treated, or was suffering under any kind of affliction. Nay, she carried this sort of weakness so far as to feel even for the brute creation; and could never be brought to endure either hunting or horse-racing.

Such was Lady Julia B——, when report became loud in the praise of Lawyer Becket's beautiful daughter; the fame of whose

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unrivalled charms had by this time spread all over the county, through the praise of her music-master, who was by no means indifferent to their power, having long suffered from their effect. Now, as there is nothing so likely to excite female curiosity as the report of female charms; which is another proof of the uncommon sway of feminine beauty, that she should compel even envy itself to do homage at her shrine; no wonder at the portion of curiosity raised upon an occasion where Miss Becket was the theme.

For with all due deference to the fair, for whom nothing human had ever more ardent affections, or more fervent zeal, than ourselves, which enables us to declare from experience, that this same female curiosity is often excited by some little pardonable ingredient in their lovely composition, very much resembling envy. And we do here aver, that Lady Julia had as small a portion of it in her charming bosom as any of the bewitching sex.

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Not so, indeed, was the case with her noble aunt, who partook of her brother's pride of birth very abundantly; she, poor neglected virgin of the wrong side of forty! was equally tenacious of her beauty and her rank. And notwithstanding the roses and lilies of nature had long since given place to those of art, her flattering mirror reconciled her daily to the change. In fact, the simper and sidelong ogle of fifteen were her constant practice; and though none were more expert in managing all the weapons of love, she could not boast of a single conquest, save one, for the last twenty years. And this solitary conquest, we blush for the honour of the noble family blood while we relate it, was—handsome Sam the footman, who was discharged for making use of his own eyes.

This plebeian, it would seem, as if nature had thrown in the way to correct the pride of another of her recreant children, was a smart dapper little fellow, full of the vigour of youth, rosy health, and uncommon agility. And the proud rogue was elated

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with the distinguished name the wenches had given him, that handsome Sam began to aspire to the notice of Miss Bridget, Lady Rachel's own maid, who, much to the disgrace of her breeding, gave the menial servants of the household but too much occasion for scandal. For when it is considered, that the lasses in the kitchen justly claimed him as a member of their own peculiar department, although, when there, they were ready enough to tear each other's caps for him; yet, when the great folks above stairs pretended to engross one of their body, they all joined in the common cause, against such a greedy innovation. The author of all this disturbance, however, remained incorrigible, and the gradations of his assurance had nearly approached the sacred person of Lady Rachel herself, when the following incident put a stop to his ambitious career.

For more than a twelvemonth, Lady Rachel had taken it into her head, that the footman who used to attend her when she walked out, became very awkward; and

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as she did not much relish the notion of being followed by a man upon whom time was every day imposing wrinkles, she chose the active Sammy for that which nobody would then have chosen her ladyship —youth.

He had continued, therefore, to attend her for about a twelvemonth, with the most assiduous attention; when one day returning from some of her favourite walks in the park, adjacent to the family mansion, as she ascended a mount that lay in their way homewards, which was rendered rather slippery, by a shower of rain that had fallen before she got up this unfortunate morning; we say, in crossing this unlucky mount, the noble person of the once lovely Lady Rachel came tumbling down. And in her fall, as the Fates would have it, exhibited one of her beautiful legs to the vulgar gaze of her own footman! Nay, and as if fired by the sight, the plebeian wretch had the audacity, under a pretext of duty, to clasp the chaste and honourable person of his mistress in his arms, with such vi-

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gorous exertion as nearly deprived her of breath. But in order to complete the disgrace of the scene, at the very moment he raised her from the earth, already too much honoured by the fall of such worth, his foot slipped, and they both came tumbling and rolling down the mount together. And just as they reached the bottom, handsome Sammy being uppermost, their situation was discovered by the lofty earl, her brother, who, to complete the climax of the disaster, happened to come up at this ill-fated instant.

The rage and confusion of the noble kindred pair, and the effrontery of handsome Sam, beggars all the powers of description; and indeed the only circumstance that surprised every one who thought they knew the honourable maiden, was her justifying the assertion of Sam to her incensed brother, that he had merely done his duty. The rest was all an accident! And to accident alone would it to this day have been placed, had not the impudence of the varlet, or rather his vanity, prompted him to launch

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forth in praise of his mistress's leg, which indeed was one of the undoubted beauties she justly prided herself upon.

Now, the very person whose jealous ears he was ever grating with the praise of his noble mistress's leg, was no other than Miss Bridget, Lady Rachel's woman, who, from not being over-scrupulous in her conduct with Sam, as before related, began to suspect the immaculate virtue of her mistress. Which suspicions were not a little strengthened by the present of a new watch, given as a keep-sake to the fellow by his mistress, the very next day after the fatal and scandalous disaster already stated. This, instead of being attributed to its obvious motive, gratitude for his late service, happened by those whom it most concerned, namely, Miss Bridget and her other lovers, to be interpreted into a downright criminal passion.

The consequence was, the lady's maid became outrageously jealous of her mistress; and the handsome footman proceed-

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ed so far in his endeavours to give her real cause for such jealousy, that he had his livery stripped off by order of his master, and was discharged without a character. Whether the pride of Lady Rachel was hurt at these degrading suspicions of her brother, or that a sort of old-maidish partiality, like that which some antiquated virgins shew to their lap-dogs, was the occasion, we cannot decide; but this is too well known, that she could never bear the sight of a female attendant about her ever since her footman's discharge, without tormenting her. So that few maids could remain long in the family who were so unfortunate as to come in contact with this noble female dragon.

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CHAP. III.

AN ACCIDENT NO WAY UNCOMMON, WHICH LEADS TO THE GRATIFICATION OF FEMALE CURIOSITY—ATTENTION OF THE BECKET FAMILY TO THE EASE OF THE YOUNG STRANGER—MR. BECKET ALARMED AT THE ACCIDENT, BEING NOTHING BUT A CONSPIRACY TO ROB HIM, &c.

THE curiosity of Lady Rachel to see the lawyer's beautiful daughter, our readers may, from the sketch we have given of her, conclude arose from envy alone, as the society of her accomplished niece had of late given her a more than common share of uneasiness. For it may with equal propriety be remarked of rival beauties, as of rival kings, few of either can bear the pretensions of another to the prize, or the throne. And of this great number, which

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constitutes an envious majority, Lady Rachel was undoubtedly one, in the strictest sense of the word; though in every other respect, bating these two foibles, pride of birth, and pride of beauty, she might be accounted unexceptionable.

Things remained in this state till the summer of the year ——, when, after a tremendous storm of thunder, the effects of which are remembered to this day, as having done considerable damage for several miles round the neighbouring country; Miss Harriet's curiosity got the better of her fears of the storm. For hearing the noise of a coach and several horses upon their unfrequented road, and running to the window, she saw a post-coach and four, coming along almost at full speed, and two servants in rich livery, well mounted, riding after it. When just as they were turning short an angle of the road opposite the front of her father's house, their speed was intercepted by the breaking down of the carriage, and a loud scream from the charming

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Harriet first announced the accident to her parents.

Her mother ran to the window at the moment the servants of the gentleman had extricated him from his situation, having been flung out with great violence, he received a very severe contusion on the side of his head, and sprained his ancle so badly, that they were obliged, with the assistance of the lawyer's servants, who were sent by their mistress, to carry him into the parlour. Here madam Becket and her angelic daughter attended him, while two of his own servants rode off full speed for chirurgical aid, through a deluge of rain.

The old lawyer, who happened then to be laid up with a fit of the gout, in the rear of the house, hearing the noise; and being alarmed for his daughter, whose scream he had just faintly heard, applied himself to the bell with all his might, roaring aloud at the same time, as was his custom upon any emergency. As soon as one of the servants could be spared, he was given to

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understand what had occasioned the disturbance he complained of; when he swore it was some conspiracy to rob the house; and was proceeding in a most violent rage to abuse the whole family, till the servant assured him it was young Lord B——, just returned from his travels, who had met with the accident he before related; and that one of his servants had been just dispatched to the earl his father for a proper conveyance thither.

He now cursed the hardship of his fate with great bitterness, for thus depriving him of an opportunity of bringing about a match that would ennoble his house for ever; and give him an opportunity of employing his riches in one of the last acts of his life in his own darling profession, by paying off the mortgages upon the B—— estate, and getting the rent-roll and sheepskins into his own gripe, of which, nothing but the inevitable stroke of death should ever deprive him.

Whatever views the old lawyer might

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thus have in embryo, it is certain his daughter viewed the young nobleman through a medium no more favourable than as a person entitled to a share of her humanity. And although in the prime of youth, and master of every accomplishment, with the addition of one of the handsomest persons in England; she has uniformly declared she beheld him with the same indifference she had hitherto regarded all his sex. But it fared far otherwise with our amorous youth; he had already felt the power of her charms, and twenty times blessed his good fortune, notwithstanding the pain he was in, for thus procuring him an interview with one of the finest creatures in the universe; nor would he have regretted the loss of a limb for such a delicious banquet.

Alas, ill-fated youth! this pleasing illusion was but of short duration. The storm having at length subsided, and a proper carriage and assistants being now arrived to convey the youth to the family mansion; and upon the arrival of the surgeon soon after, much to the regret and disappoint-

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ment of his patient, he declared his removal might be effected with perfect safety. This amiable young nobleman hereupon returned his grateful acknowledgments for the humane attention he had experienced in the most expressive terms; and begged to have permission of sometimes being honoured with the liberty of calling in person to enquire after the health of the lady mother and her lovely daughter; which proposal was gladly accepted by the old gentlewoman, who was no less sanguine in her hopes of Miss Harriet's conquest than was her prudent husband.

Before the youth was removed, however, he found an opportunity of whispering the state of his heart to his charmer, whilst he imprinted a burning kiss upon her outstretched lily hand; and then was conveyed with as much ease as possible to the mansion of his ancestors. Here, being arrived, his sister and aunt flew to welcome him home, and the former uttered her regret for his accident in terms of the purest affection. While Lady Rachel attributed the whole to

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the carelessness of the servants, whose neglect she declared ought to be punished with the greatest severity.

The earl now arrived, and received his son with all the pomp and dignity of a peer, but with very little of the tenderness of a parent: the loss of an heir to his illustrious house might indeed alarm his fears, but in this the voice of nature was entirely neuter. But having been assured by the surgeon, that the accident was of no serious consequence, his anxiety upon that account was no longer excited. Yet these professional assurances were considerably weakened, when in less than twenty-four hours after they had been given, the fears of the whole family were awakened by the young nobleman becoming quite delirious.

In fact, the pain of his ancle and head, together with the extreme agitation of his mind, had thrown him into a fever, the effects of which he concealed as long as he could, by declaring himself much better than he really was. And this he did, in

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order that he might be left to his own reflections upon the probable event of his suit with the lawyer's charming daughter. Now as the earl, his father, had given him several proofs of his inflexible prejudices in favour of high birth, he wisely foresaw an insurmountable obstacle in that quarter to the completion of his wishes; and he was too generous, and too sincerely enamoured to think of making any but honourable proposals to so much perfection. The consequence of these perplexing cogitations was a fever upon the brain; and in his fits of delirium, he constantly raved about the safety of his angelic Harriet.

His aunt Rachel, and amiable sister Julia, were seldom from his bed-side, to which they repaired the moment his situation was announced by the physician; and his father came once too often, and quite time enough to witness the intended degradation of his noble house, by the violent confession of the heir to it. Scarcely restrained by his sense of the danger, which threatened the prop of all his honours and

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his name, from exhibiting some external marks of his resentment, he had just command enough over himself to leave the room in silent rage. Determined rather to endure the loss of his only son and heir, than that the noble blood of the illustrious house of B— should be contaminated with such a plebeian mixture.

His haughty sister, Lady Rachel, would have carried the family mania quite as far, but that dame Nature had infused into her virgin composition a few more drops of the milk of human kindness, which upon the present occasion began to circulate in the veins that conveyed it in a full tide to the heart, every pulse of which now began to beat in favour of her dear nephew, whose existence was as precious to her as her own.

As our readers have been made acquainted with the amiable disposition of young Lord B—'s sister, Lady Julia, they will not be surprised at the benevolence of a scheme formed by her and Lady Rachel for the recovery of their ill-fated, but darling re-

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lative. And this scheme, which included a considerable sacrifice of pride on the part of his aunt, they were resolved to lose no time in communicating to him upon the first lucid interval he should be blessed with.

After three weeks' uncertain application of the best medical aid, Nature, and the knowledge of the mental balsamic ingredient, contained in the charitable scheme already mentioned, brought him to a state which the learned physician declared convalescent. And then it was that these truly noble-minded females condescended to put their scheme in practice, which would afford them a fair opportunity of gratifying their curiosity, in contemplating those charms, which had made such havoc in the constitution of their dear relation.

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CHAP. IV.

THE TWO LADIES PAY A MORNING VISIT TO THE LAWYER'S BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTER, AND ARE SURPRISED AT THE LUSTRE OF HER CHARMS—THEY ACQUAINT HER OF HER CONQUEST, AND ITS EFFECTS, AND PREVAIL ON HER TO VISIT THE UNFORTUNATE YOUTH—SHE REPEATS HER VISITS, BUT IS STILL DEAF TO THE VOICE OF LOVE—THE EARL BECOMES ACQUAINTED WITH HIS SON'S MEANNESS, &c.

HAVING thus a laudable pretext for gratifying female curiosity, the two ladies, Rachel, and the charming Julia, repaired one fine morning, before a soul was stirring, but themselves and the servant who attended them, to pay their intended visit to this paragon of loveliness, in whose praise fame

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had been so loud. But of this visit they took care to apprise her by a polite note, the evening previous to their setting off upon this pedestrian expedition.

Miss Becket had prudently communicated the contents of this note to her mamma, as soon as she had conned it over two or three times, for to say the truth her vanity was therein highly flattered; and as the illness of the young nobleman was no secret in the lawyer's family, the old couple sagaciously enough placed it to the account of their daughter's charms, from which they augured the fairest, and most productive issue. When, therefore, the ladies approached the lawn, the charming Harriet flew to meet them; but they were so struck with the lustre of her beauty, that they could scarcely acquit themselves of the usual ceremonials indispensable amongst persons of good breeding.

They were conducted by the lovely girl into the parlour, and introduced to her mother, who overwhelmed them with a

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profusion of compliments, from which they were relieved by her impatience to communicate the news to her yoke-fellow. And pleading the necessity of her attendance upon him, made her curtsey, and immediately hied with the glad tidings of the honour done the family of the Beckets, to the afflicted head of it. This favourable interval was seized by Lady Julia to prefer her brother's suit, which she did with all the ardour of sincere friendship. In fact, although the charming Harriet was insensible to his lordship's merit in a tender point of view, she was not so deaf to the voice of ambition, upon which theme she had had a number of lectures from her parents, sufficient to make her imbibe a considerable portion of their ambitious views.

Thus situated, and her vanity so completely inflamed by the visit and solicitation of two ladies of such rank and consequence, she agreed to a tete-a-tete in the love-sick youth's apartment, in company of those who so earnestly proposed it. And the next day, when the earl was to attend

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his duty in parliament, was fixed for the much-desired interview.

Punctual to the appointment, our fair goddess, like another Hygeia, proceeded to give health by her presence to the afflicted youth; and, accompanied by her fair guides, entered the apartment of the young enamoured lord. But the shadow now exhibited to her astonished view was more an object of pity than of the tender flame, he being reduced to something more than a mere skeleton; pale, tottering, and consumed with the fever, and his ardent passion for the divinity then before him. An attempt to describe the feelings which agitated the group of interesting figures then assembled upon such an occasion, being above any effort of our pen, we shall transfer the arduous task to the masters of the pencil, as coming more within their immediate province. The effects of this interview exceeded every thing known from those of medical applications, and the patient mended apace; every succeeding interview affording some new mark of the

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perfection, both of body and mind, of his lovely Harriet. In less than a fortnight after her first visit, the youth was able to pay his grateful respects to his fair doctress; and, although he had not as yet been able to prevail on her, either to confess a tender partiality for him, or a promise not to bestow her hand on another; yet the interest his sister took in the affair, for the two young ladies were now become inseparable, as well as his rank and great expectations, inspired him with more than common hopes of success.

But to shew the vanity of all human pursuits, and the bitter vicissitudes from which even the most virtuous are not exempt, we reluctantly proceed to the melancholy catastrophe of this singular amour. The frequent interviews between Lord B—— and Miss Harriet, at the family mansion, though conducted with all possible secrecy, was discovered to the earl, who took his measures accordingly. Having taken his station, one day, at the window of an adjacent room, where he could not be seen by those

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without, and from whence, through another room, which led to his son's chamber, he was determined to come forward and surprise the lovers, and then discard his heir for such contemptible meanness. When at the fourth visit she paid her enamoured patient, unfortunately for this haughty peer, he had a full view of such uncommon charms as he had never imagined a mortal to be in possession of. And strange to relate, if any thing effected by the power of beauty can be so, all his schemes of pride and revenge instantly fell to the ground. So in less than a week, after two or three additional magic glances of her unparalleled charms, he forgot his son, his noble family; and last, though not least of all, he relinquished his pride of ancestry, and sacrificed the whole at the altar of love! Nay, he descended so far towards the humble character of a mere mortal, as to confess, with every reluctant throb of a high-swoln heart, that there was no warring against all-powerful nature, when allied with beauty.

In short, he several times met his in-

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tended bride at her father's, the old lawyer, so secretly, that before his unfortunate son was sensible of any change in the conduct of his mistress, the marriage settlements were drawn, and the ill-fated youth soon after received the petrifying commands of a cruel father, to cease from prosecuting his suit with a person, who in a few days would become his parent, by the laws of the land, and the immaculate church established by these unerring laws. It would be a task too painful for our feelings, or still more so to those of our reader, to enter farther into the detail of this singularly unfortunate business.

Suffice it therefore to say, that upon the very ominous morning, this unfeeling wretched father gave his hand to the lovely but insensible Harriet Becket, that unpropitious day, was the last of his ill-fated amiable son's reason; who has ever since remained an inhabitant of one of those receptacles of human misery, than which no earthly condition of wretchedness can be more deplorably wretched.

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In pity to the sensibility of our fair readers, we shall suppress the remainder of the narrative which relates to the sufferings of the aunt and charming sister of this unfortunate young nobleman. Indeed the poignancy of their grief was beyond all description, particularly that of the latter: we shall therefore close this melancholy chapter by informing them of what nearly concerns them all to know; namely, that possession of the most lovely object amongst their angelic sex, will often lead to indifference in the best of our fickle and deceitful gender. That the basis of a lasting union must be laid in two rationally virtuous minds, which never fails to produce that harmony of sentiment, which is the true hymeneal source of mutual and permanent endearment. The noble earl, in less than a twelvemonth after basely supplanting his son, added one name more to the long catalogue of instances that establishes the preceding remarks. And although something resembling love would now and then appear in his conduct towards his charming bride, it was like the faint glimmering

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of a nearly exhausted taper, which, even the feeblest breath of indifference was capable of extinguishing. But in lieu of affection she was now in possession of a title.

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CHAP. V.

LADY B—— PRESENTS HER NOBLE CONSORT WITH A BOY—NOT PERMITTED TO BE A CEMENT OF SUCH A UNION—DIES SOON AFTER—PEEVISHNESS OF THE EARL TOWARDS HIS WIFE—HER FASHIONABLE INDIFFERENCE—SUSPICIOUS CONDUCT—CONSEQUENCES THEREOF.

THERE was but one event, and that a natural, and to most parents a very joyous one, which gave Lady B—— the smallest chance of retaining even the attention of a man of the earl's disposition; and this was presenting him with a charming boy within the twelvemonth of their union. But this maternal hope was quickly blasted, by the exit of the poor infant, upon the seventh day after its first appearance upon this stage of misery and deception.

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To add neglect to the feelings of a mother upon so trying an occasion, would have been quite in character of a fashionable husband; but Lady B—— had scarcely received the last of her visitors, who came with their compliments upon her recovery from her accouchement, than her lord began to betray symptoms of peevishness, that would have distressed any woman in her situation, who had a particle of real affection for her husband. But to say the truth, this lovely woman, with all her accomplishments, possessed as little conjugal sensibility as ever fell to the share of a fashionable wife; and she, therefore, made herself ample amends, as soon as an opportunity offered, for any neglect of attention in her noble spouse, by a conduct, to say the best of it, rather suspicious.

In a few weeks after she had been abroad, the house was crowded with visitors; but the number of beaux that attended all her parties by far exceeded the ladies: and parties of pleasure were now all

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that engrossed the otherwise vacant mind of Lady B——; indeed, so completely changed was her conduct, that the gentle and amiable Lady Julia, after frequently remonstrating in vain, refused to be at any more of her entertainments. In short, the terms upon which the earl and his lady now lived, was no longer a secret; and, if she had not yet adorned his noble brows with additional honours, more ancient than any he could ever boast, it was more owing to the number that contended for the favour of assisting her to place them in a becoming manner, agreeably to the vogue of high life, than to any deficiency of inclination upon her part.

No wonder then, if upon this, as several other occasions, scandal had long anticipated an event which was yet to take place; and that our hero of the road, Captain S——, in whose possession we left the celebrated picture, shoul actually be the first man, may occasion surprise in the mind of any person ignorant of the

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pranks of blind Fortune. Whatever doubts may hereafter arise upon a subject of such fashionable moment, we can aver, upon the best authority, that our redoubtable hero was the man favoured with the envied and delightful privilege, of first conferring another title upon a peer of the realm.

But that same fickle goddess, whose unaccountable freaks we have had, and shall have frequent occasion to observe, and who hath more controul over the affairs of us poor mortals, than is generally supposed or acknowledged, had certainly thus ordered it, and we all know her will is absolute.

The first time and place her ladyship ever saw our captain, was during a very crowded season at Brighton, where, upon the east-cliff, near the Steyne, he then occupied very elegant apartments, drove his curricle in the first style, little inferior to the *Phaeton* of all modern and ancient knights, though *still a lad*. With equal

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address to the whip just mentioned, did our hero dash along the course; with equal spirit too was he followed by two footmen in superb livery. This, and a number of other ingenious means, was he at that time pursuing with great assiduity, in order to get rid of a few thousands left him by a thrifty old small-beer and ale brewer, who had most conveniently been removed from all his worldly cares about a twelve-month, to afford his son sufficient scope for the extravagance of his choice spirit, uncontrouled by any thing so boring as parental or prudent advice.

Nature, who had not been less bountiful to our spark than his indulgent parent, having bestowed upon him just such a person, as few ladies, upon a critical examination, could scarcely discover a fault in. And as his constitution was amorous, good nature, and agreeable manners were his passports to the best company in the place; nor were his pretensions to the character he assumed ever disputed by the master of the ceremonies at the Castle Tavern. In-

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deed it was generally acknowledged in that polite circle, that whenever the handsome Captain S—— was there, a crowded assembly was almost certain.

At this ball her ladyship met him by appointment, danced with him, and from that time marked him for her own, to the no small mortification of several fashionable characters, who were then honourable candidates for the vacancy in her affections. And now, for the first time in her existence, she felt what it really was to love, convincing proofs of which she was daily giving her chere ami, by every symptom even of sheer jealousy, which an ardent passion commonly dictates; when the attention of the happy pair was awakened to other scenes than those of love. In short, the busy tongue of meddling rumour had informed the earl of his disgrace in less than a week after it happened, and his contempt for the rank, and situation in life of this defiler of his bed, prevented him from doing that justice to his injured honour, which the mistaken laws of that most fallible of

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all human tribunals generally inspire. He, therefore, furnished himself with the proper weapons of legal resentment for such a varlet, and forthwith set off for the scene of his revenge.

The incautious manner in which Lady B—— and her paramour then lived at Brighton, rendered the usual difficulty of legal proof and detection, in this case, perfectly easy. And the fond pair were surprised in bed, pro forma, by a sufficient number of witnesses accordingly, who were to serve the purpose of the earl at a future time. And this delightful incident, for the present, furnished abundant food for the lovers of scandal at this gay watering mart, for the remainder of the season.

After the discovery of this amour, the general publicity of which became somewhat troublesome; the lovers decamped from the scene of scandal, and settled as privately as possible at a little fishing town called Worthing, about fourteen miles from Brighton; and after some short stay in that neighbour-

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hood, they returned to town with perfect nonchalance, where our hero lived publicly with his frail charmer, and by a verdict of the Court of King's Bench, obtained by the earl, for damages amounting to five thousand pounds, for which our young beau was soon after arrested, being several hundreds more than he had to pay. His lordship soon after sued for and obtained a divorce; and our ci-devant captain, in consequence of discharging some large gaming debts, which as a man of fashion he was in honour bound to settle first, retreated to the King's Bench prison with a very slender pittance. As to her ladyship, she was secured by some friends, and carried prisoner to her father's country house at ———, where she continued till one of her former admirers of the Brighton circle gallantly achieved her release; and purchased a house in Upper Norton Street, allowed her a handsome establishment, and, while the charm of novelty lasted, behaved in every respect like a nobleman, though his subsequent conduct was diametrically opposite. But we must, however, do our he-

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roine the justice to declare, that in the embraces of the gallant peer, she never forgot her handsome captain, after whom she made every enquiry consistent with her peculiar situation.

In the interim our hero was liberated, after two years' confinement, by one of those gracious acts of the legislature that empties the prisons of the metropolis, at stated periods, of their dregs in a promiscuous discharge of good and bad, without any discrimination.

Thus thrown upon society, after tiring out all his friends, and being too much of a gentleman to understand any mode of industry by which he could subsist; he had at length recourse to the clandestine occupation of levying contributions on his Majesty's liege subjects; many of whom, he would say, which may be well enough founded, would have seen him starve and perish before they would part with a shilling, had he begged it with the greatest humility.

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In this hazardous, but genteel profession, he had been very fortunate, both as to emolument and personal safety; always doing business alone; so that, although he was strongly suspected by the terriers of justice, as well as his nocturnal associates, yet he was fortunate enough to preserve his neck from a Newgate solitaire. With his companions, at least a select few, he had been known more than once to exhibit the proofs of his success, as in the instance of the picture anecdote; nor were his acts of generosity confined to the narrow circle in which he considered himself as perfectly at home and safe. But with all his prudence and caution, the sequel will prove that he was more indebted to the reverse of a very common proverb, than to all his virtues of prudence, courage, and the like.

The accidental meeting of the lovers, whose history we have just sketched, after an absence of nearly three years, was productive of the liveliest transports; and, after they had satisfied each other with as much of their adventures as squared with their

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present views and situation, they gave a loose to all the extravagance of love and luxury. In consequence of which, the poor painter was forgotten, and our divine picture was thrown carelessly under one of the tables in the parlour; where, had it not been for the green cloth in which the poor painter pawned it; no celebrated knight of the hammer would ever had the enviable pleasure of dwelling upon its inimitable beauties, till the magic sound of nine hundred and fifty guineas produced the fortunate knock down blow. For one of the servant maids, hearing her lady's bell ring a hasty peal, clapt a heavy coal-skuttle out of her hand under the table, directly upon the surface which contained the matchless resemblance of the darling offspring of the immortal Guido.

It was while the fond pair sat chatting over their coffee in the said parlour, some hours after this careless act of the servant, that one of the lovely eyes of Lady B—— glanced accidentally upon the green cloth which contained the heavenly degraded

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matron and her angelic attendants, under the coal-skuttle. This lucky glance being accompanied by an enquiry of what it was, and how it came there, brought to our hero's recollection, circumstances which he now wished buried in oblivion. However, in the midst of his unexpected good fortune, elated as he was, the thoughts of the poor painter instantly struck across his mind, and furnished him at once with a very satisfactory answer to the lady's eager enquiry; and at the same time afforded him an opportunity of indulging the natural benevolence of his disposition to the advantage of his friend. He, therefore, briefly related the general distress of the artist, for whom he had yesterday morning, just before he was so fortunate as to be blest again with her sight, redeemed it; and, that nothing but the extreme joy he experienced from such unexpected happiness, could have so far deprived him of the use of his faculties, as to make him forget the distresses of his friend.

This apology he uttered whilst opening

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the sacred gem from the green baize, which preserved and concealed its excellence; which no sooner met the intelligent eye of Lady B——, than she exclaimed—"Good heavens! was there ever any thing so exquisitely fascinating, as the expression in the face of the Virgin, and the group of heavenly cherubs attending upon her!" In short, she pronounced it a masterpiece of some divine Raphael, long since called to the regions of bliss, instead of the crude production of a distressed modern dauber; declaring at the same time her resolution of retaining possession of such a jewel at any price.

This latter declaration was by no means agreeable to our hero of the road, for reasons we have before acquainted our readers with; but knowing that opposition would but strengthen her resolves, he thought proper to undertake the management of the affair between her and the painter, as to the purchase; and thus left her in the mistake into which she had fallen, respecting

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its being the production of the poor artist.

Amongst the various accomplishments of Lady B——, drawing was not of the least, having been instructed by one of the great masters of that day, who had from time to time furnished her with a fine collection of the best prints, after the most celebrated Italian painters. Her being so struck with the beauty of our incomparable picture, although she mistook it for an original, is at once a proof of her knowledge and her taste. For of the two admirable copies made by the Flemish painter, this which was the subject of her ladyship's admiration was by far the freest and the best; and, prejudice aside, as well as the just and laudable veneration we ought to have for any thing from the hand of such a master, the difference between the merit of the original and the copy was really trivial. But when compared with the difference of what they would each produce in price, the proportion must appear

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to every rational person, as the mere frenzy of capricious extravagance.

For, notwithstanding the sum exacted from the dealers for our present subject, as a just punishment for their ignorant presumption, seventy guineas might have purchased either of the copies from the Flemish artist who painted both.

But what shall we say to the glorious encouragement offered to the ingenious painters upon the Continent, even now, when we inform our readers, that if this very picture were sold under an idea of originality, there are spirits sufficiently liberal, in the first metropolis in the universe, to contend for its possession, at the moderate price of one thousand guineas! To be paid for in bank paper, as if the said currency was, in point of intrinsic value, worth no more than a thirty-thousandth part of the said sum in golden guineas.

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CHAP. VI.

FORLORN CONDITION OF THE PORTRAIT-PAINTER—IS GENEROUSLY RELIEVED BY THE WELL-TIMED BOUNTY OF CAPTAIN S. HIS FRIEND—DELICATE AND NOBLE MANNER OF ASSISTING THE DISTRESSED, WITHOUT WOUNDING THEIR FEELINGS—TOUR TO THE CONTINENT, AND POLITENESS OF A FOREIGN NOBLEMAN TO THE ENGLISH TRAVELLERS, &c.

BUT to return from this digression to our hero Captain S. and his friend the poor portrait painter, who, at the time we allude, would have blessed the bountiful sitter that would have rewarded him for three hard days of labour to please, with the satisfactory remuneration of a single guinea. To him now, our fortunate collector, the captain, repaired; and, finding him half-

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starved, and quite dejected, sitting in all the garments he possessed in the world, generously slipped five guineas into his hand, by the way of lightening his heart. And taking him by the arm, led him down stairs to a neighbouring coffee-house, in silent but expressive gratitude. When the painter had satisfied the cravings of his appetite, his friend, in few words, gave him to understand the wonderful change fortune had wrought in his favour within so short a time. And that he was now determined to make some amends for the disappointment this good luck had occasioned, by preventing him from keeping his appointment, when they last met. "Now," continued he, "as the picture was your's, and the right I exercised in getting possession of it, chiefly owing to the necessity I found myself reduced to, of destroying what in the hands of a scoundrel usurer might endanger my neck, being now done away, I must insist upon your fixing a handsome price upon it. And as I am commissioned by the generous creature who has thus rescued me from a precarious exist-

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ence, I know her intentions can never be more satisfactorily obeyed, than by giving you two hundred guineas for it, at least."

The painter was all amazement at the generous offer of his friend; and, unable to make any reply, the other answered for him thus—"I will have no studied apologies—no haggling—two hundred, or nothing—say the word—yes, or no, determines the matter." Now, although few persons would have hesitated in pronouncing the right monosyllable for such a sum, the poor artist has since declared, it was the most difficult attempt he ever made in elocution. He, however, succeeded, and received the just reward of his long and unmerited sufferings.

In the society of these fond, but erring lovers, he spent the remainder of the summer and autumn, in a tour to the Continent, where, in visiting a nobleman's collection, who understanding him to be an artist, very politely invited the party into

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his beautiful and valuable library; when, after shewing them many curious and scarce manuscripts, he unlocked an ivory cabinet, and exhibited to their astonished view, the real, the sacred gem, glowing and perfect, as when it came from the immortal hands of its divine author, Guido!

But if their surprise was great, what must the reader conceive of the noble person's, whose excessive politeness to the strangers had caused the confusion that ensued, when he heard from the handsomest mouth in the universe, a claim made of that jewel, which, but for the person of the claimant alone, nothing could induce him to part with. The obstinacy of the lady, backed by the most solemn asseverations of two English gentlemen, one of whom, being a painter too, was enough to stagger the soundest judgment: and, for a while the nobleman could do nothing but assert, upon his honour, they must labour under some inexplicable mistake.

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All this was, however, in vain; and the more they examined, the more they were convinced of the picture having travelled quicker than they did from England, by about three weeks. For they had been something more than that time upon the Continent, before they visited the Hague. Here, then, the parties were at issue, when the nobleman begged they would pledge their honour, that they would not divulge a secret which he was about to reveal, that must completely satisfy their minds.

To this they readily consented, all three being of opinion, that the nobleman was about to confess the means by which he got possession of Lady B——'s picture. He then proceeded to inform them, but enjoined profound secresy while they remained on the Continent, and even after their return home, as to the place where, and in whose possession, they saw it. He then surprised the party little less by the detail of the history of where it was stolen from, and from whom he purchased it, whose profession, and eminence in it, he

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had no sooner mentioned, than our English painter immediately hit upon a clue that unravelled all the mystery; by generously declaring, he had no doubt now of the picture he sold Lady B—— being a copy by that very Flemish painter whose name he immediately declared, but which the nobleman had hitherto concealed; assuring them, that when he was in the habits of intimacy with that herculean genius Wilson, the landscape-painter, he had frequently heard him relate wonders which the Flemish painter was used to perform; and that the celebrated Vernet, and many other eminent painters, then in Rome, had witnessed the same.

One anecdote, amongst many others, he remembered, and would relate, namely, that the Flemish painter, being one day in Vernet's painting-room, when at work upon one of a small pair of cabinet pictures, Vernet was called down stairs, to Cardinal Z——. The Flemish artist, as soon as he heard the servant tell his master of the person's name that wanted him, took up the

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palette, and put the canvas of the companion picture, which had been just dead-coloured, upon the easel. He then offered Wilson a wager, that he would forward the work of it as much as the companion, before Vernet returned from the cardinal; who should not discover the trick, nor his own work, within an hour after he resumed his place. This challenge Wilson, who had seen Vernet at work upon the other picture, at least three hours, readily accepted; and down sat the Flemish copyist, with all the confidence which a certainty of succeeding inspires.

During the first hour, Wilson was so wholly intent upon the return of his friend, that he paid little or no attention to the progress his antagonist had made; but, being something disappointed at the delay of another half-hour, he turned about to see how forward the other had got with his job, and what chance he had of winning his wager; when, to his utter astonishment, both pictures being upon the easel, he was unable to discover which

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Vernet had worked upon so long, before the Flemish painter came that morning. The subject of both being Italian sea-ports, the general objects were nearly similar; and their being dead-coloured very slightly, of consequence favoured the deception. Just within half an hour of the time, Vernet was heard coming up stairs, and the Flemish painter had but just time to lay the palette and pencils in the same place he took them from, and to remove the canvas Vernet had worked upon to the place where he had taken the companion from, with the face turned to the wainscot; leaving his own work upon the easel in its stead.

After Vernet had rated the cardinal pretty freely for his tedious impertinence, and related the orders he had given his servant never to trouble him with his eminence again; he took up his palette and pencils, and re-commenced his labour: conversing occasionally with his friends, upon the subject of the arts, till the dinner-bell rang, which was more than three hours

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after the time specified in the wager; about which not a word was said till dinner was over, and Wilson was called upon for it; when, affecting to demur, the matter was left to the decision of their host, who, when both the pictures were produced, after some time, with much difficulty, discovered his own, and very fairly adjudged the Flemish painter the wager.

This anecdote, and what our English portrait painter had before stated, heartily reconciled all parties, but the lady; and, after several apologies for the mistake into which they had thus inadvertently fallen, our English travellers continued their route through Flanders, to Paris; leaving the divine original subject of our Memoirs in the safe possession of the nobleman, who had sufficient judgment and taste to appreciate its value, and preserve it accordingly.

And there, in his judicious possession, we shall now leave it, until we come to relate the extraordinary circumstance that

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caused its removal and subsequent misfortunes; and, whilst our travellers pursue their journey, we shall just return to Lady B——'s house in Norton Street, to enquire after the situation of the picture, which so nearly resembled the nobleman's, as above related. Which *kindred resemblance*, we can assure our readers, hath caused much *pleasant, and some serious confusion;* all of which shall be faithfully related in the sequel of this original and veritable history: the honest biography of which it shall be our pride to support, and our boast to proclaim; equally unawed by the cavils of the interested, or the clamours of ignorance.

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CHAP. VII.

CONTAINING MATTERS OF HIGH AND LOW CONSIDERATION; A PROVIDENTIAL ESCAPE FROM FIRE; AND THE LOSS OF THE PICTURE.

LADY B——, before her departure for the Continent, had arranged all her domestic affairs with her servants, six in number, two footmen and the coachman, a housekeeper, cook, and her own maid, to the latter of whom she gave particular orders respecting her study, which was the only apartment in the house they were prohibited from entering. This was a handsome light room, where she amused herself with writing, drawing and music; the furniture of which consisted in busts, coins, a good collection of prints, drawings, shells, musical instruments, three family portraits, and

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the copy of the subject of our Memoirs. Which last article she valued more than all the rest, and therefore took all the necessary precautions of shutting every avenue to the study, which having locked, she secured the key in a book-case in her own bed-chamber, the key of which she carried with her.

The second day after her departure, the ladies and gentlemen of the kitchen came to a resolution, very commonly adopted by persons in their station, namely, that whenever they can have a little leisure from restraint, nothing can be better than to spend their time as merrily as possible. And for this purpose, each of them was allowed the privilege of inviting a friend; and Lady B——'s house in Norton Street was as much the place of attraction to the lovers of beauty and pleasure, in a more humble sphere, as it was to those of a more exalted rank, during her ladyship's residence there. Several of these entertainments had passed off with perfect good humour, and the guests in general carried the burthen of

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themselves, and a tolerable share of the lady's wine, home with a steady and safe pace. But this sort of moderation was not so congenial to the liberal spirit of the head-footman, who, when his lady was in town, acted in the double capacity of butler and footman; but had now such an aversion to his livery, that from the day his mistress departed for the Continent, he was determined to confine himself to one occupation; and in the cellar department, it must be confessed he had not been idle. In one of these nocturnal revels, when this party-coloured votary of the jolly god had encouraged the guests by his example to do honour to the character he always gave her ladyship's wine, of which it must be confessed he was rather tenacious, the ladies and gentlemen exerted themselves so effectually to the utmost, in support of the butler's opinion, that, before twelve o'clock, there was not an individual of the party could utter a syllable against it. And what was nothing very surprising, after half an hour longer practice, so prone are we to change, no gentleman was capable of stand-

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ing up in support of the very cause they were lately so strenuous in defence of. The ladies, who had upon this, as on all former occasions, very naturally looked to the gentlemen for protection, finding how things were, from certain approaching symptoms, resigned themselves to their fate; no wonder that the weak sex and their cause, under such circumstances, should fall to the ground together. The gentlemen, however, for we must give them credit for their intention, after gallantly striving each to recover his lady from such prostrate degradation, and finding that effort impossible, nobly deposited themselves by the side of the fair, from which they were dragged, but with the greatest difficulty, and by superior force, or they had certainly perished for their manly attachment. As the serious cause of an accident which led to the discovery of this bacchanalian orgy has never been clearly ascertained, we shall not here delay the reader with any conjecture upon so hot a subject; but certain it is, that about half past three, in one of the finest mornings in the month

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of August, the neighbourhood of Norton Street was disturbed with the cry of "Fire!" and the rattles of the watchmen were sprung with such effect, as to rouse every one to a sense of danger, who heard the dreadful cry of "Fire" reiterated by several discordant throats, in one awful alarm. After repeated efforts had been made at the kitchen-bell, the hall-door, and several of the kitchen-windows, which were broken, without in the least disturbing those who were in the greatest danger, the firemen, who had by this time arrived with their engines, got over the iron-rails, and found the area-door, which led to the kitchen, and from thence to the housekeeper's room, where lay,

> In slumber sound,
> Each snoring victim to the potent juice
> Which yields oblivion to the frowns of care.

The raging and destructive element had now ravaged all the parlour-story above their heads, and the joists of the floors were nearly burned through, ready to force their burning fall through the lath and

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plaster, into the various rooms in the basement story, whence the insensible group of bacchanalians were rescued from their perilous situation by the strength and courage of the firemen. The confusion and terror arising from such a scene, and their effects upon beings just recovering from the stupor of such a debauch, may be easily conceived; and the anxiety of the feeling neighbourhood, for the fate of those who might still be within the power of the devouring flames, which had now reached the drawing-room-floor, caused such a general sensation as does honour to the human character. As yet no regular supply of water could be obtained, and the cisterns, and other temporary reservoirs of the neighbourhood, were ineffectually exhausted in supplying the various engines, which, from the eagerness of the multitude to work several at once, were hereby rendered of little use. After a considerable time had thus elapsed, the coachman recovered sufficient presence of mind to satisfy the enquiries of the anxious crowd, that his fellow-servants, horses and all, were safe; but as to the

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cause of the conflagration, he was as incapable of satisfying their enquiries as any of the rest, and the effects never gave him a moment's care or uneasiness. The surprising hazards and danger which the firemen are accustomed to overcome, from a combination of skill, strength, and courage, are too well known to make any description of them necessary here; and therefore, we have only to relate, that, by their exertions, the best part of the furniture was saved from the flames, though all the valuables could not be protected from the depredations of a few callous-hearted miscreants, who, dead to every sentiment of pity and remorse, do all in their power to make one of the greatest of human calamities more calamitous; for at this time the metropolis was not blessed with the security of a volunteer phalanx, composed of the respectable part of their praiseworthy fellow-citizens.

A supply of water enabled the firemen to employ hundreds of the willing and impatient spectators to work the engines; and,

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by uncommon exertion, the flames were got under before the two-pair-of-stairs floor caught fire, so that this and the attic story were saved. The servants, to whose more than carelessness the accident was attributed, lost scarcely any thing, as most of their clothes, &c. was in the attic story, which remained untouched; and all they seemed to regret, was the curiosities of their mistress's study, particularly the valuable picture, about which, each had received the most punctual orders never to meddle with while their lady was at home; and the disconsolate waiting-woman, in particular, had received her caution, at the last moment of her lady's departure, not to approach the study till her return. Her concern was therefore excessive, when she heard that entire floor was destroyed, and that the firemen, after breaking open the door, and seeing nothing that appeared to them so worthy of salvation in it as there was in the two rooms they passed to get to it, cleared them of the valuable furniture first; and by the time they had accomplished that object, and returned to the

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study, they had scarcely time to throw what it contained out of the windows into the garden, before the flames compelled them to withdraw. By which curious mode of saving the busts from the fire, they were dashed to pieces, and lay buried under promiscuous heaps of broken, half-burned boards, kitchen utensils, and other lumber which had been thrown there in the general confusion. But most fatal and grievous of all, was the general opinion, that the faithful resemblance of our matchless Guido had shared the same fate. This disaster, as it admitted of no remedy, they knew would completely bar the door to all reconciliation; and their case being alike desperate, they all, except the housekeeper and coachman, betook themselves to flight, seeking an asylum, in various directions, amongst their grateful brethren of the cloth. These two faithful domestics, being equally involved with the rest, and having determined to abide the return of their mistress, and by confessing the truth of their intoxicated state, throw themselves upon her mercy. But as no confederacy can be

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lasting, where there is not a union of interest, and as this truth had cost the housekeeper some pains to inculcate in the stubborn mind of this son of the whip, who had been so long in the habit of driving, that she could never get the whip-hand of him, till this event seconded her purpose so well, that she persuaded him to put on the matrimonial harness, and draw by her side for life. They accordingly took lodgings as near the scene of destruction as possible, till the workmen had completed a temporary residence for them at the end of the garden, and converted a hay-loft over the stable into a tolerable dwelling. Here they kept a tolerably watchful eye over the workmen, and saved all they could from the depredations of interlopers of every description.

About a fortnight after the accident, the nobleman who so gallantly liberated Lady B—— from her paternal prison, and had been at the expence of furnishing the house so lately damaged, the lease of which he bought, and presented her with, returned

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to town, after the fatigues of a strong contested election for ——————, where his endeavours, although against the laws made and provided against the interference of peers on such occasions, were crowned with success, and secured his friend and dependant a seat in the house. This virtuous nobleman, who never thought himself bound by any law that opposed his interest, or his passions, was notwithstanding a rigid supporter of all the measures of those who enacted laws for the preservation of what is called Game, and also for another term rather more abstruse in its signification and effect, Social Order; for the enforcing of which, no man within either house could be more strenuous. How far he contributed by his example, when out of St. Stephen's Chapel, to give effect to those laws, may be learned in a few instances noted down in this our veritable record of human inconsistencies, as the innocent design which accelerated his journey to town, after his laudable exertions in the country, will partly evince. In short, Lady B—— had charms sufficient to induce a fashion-

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able deviation from those rigid forms which stoics only can observe, and to which anchorites alone can strictly adhere. His lordship experienced great disappointment, when he learned the destruction of so much of his bounty; and his mortification was equal, upon learning that the faithless, lovely creature, had, in the very first week of his absence, eloped to the Continent with a rival, against whom he vowed the bitterest revenge, although he never saw him in his life; so much was his nice sense of honour wounded by the conduct of another, in nearly a similar case. In his frequent visits to the coachman and housekeeper, and directing the workmen in their repairs of the house, which he resolved to occupy as soon as it could be got ready, he chanced to fix his roying eyes upon the innocent daughter of an industrious tradesman in the neighbourhood, and became so smitten with her charms, that all his usual engines were immediately set in motion to accomplish the noble purpose of her seduction and ruin. As the young lady was but just turned of fourteen, any

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attack upon her heart, as yet a stranger to any passion, was not likely to succeed; when, after repeated attempts upon her vanity to as little purpose, he found an auxiliary in the avarice of her unnatural parent, who, to her eternal infamy, was the vile agent for the barter of her child's innocence, and received the execrable wages of her infant prostitution. Her more natural parent, the father, after separating from his monster of a wife, died of a broken heart; and her brother, a youth of extreme sensibility and talent, ran away from the neighbourhood that witnessed such an abominable disgrace, and enlisted for an East India soldier; whether he is still living or dead we know not; but to our sorrow we relate, that such a monster as his mother still exists, and, with her emaciated daughter, subsist on a pension derived from the same degrading source. During this amour, the virtuous peer so completely forgot all his tenderness for Lady B——, that she had been returned, and in possession of her house, two months, without his knowledge of the matter. For most of the time this

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virtuous negociation was pending, the young lady and her mamma were on a visit at a friend's, some miles from town, near one of his lordship's country seats; and when that was concluded, he spent the remainder of the time in jaunts to amuse and divert the poor victim from reflecting on her situation, and the cursed unnatural parent who brought her into it. Although we had, from the beginning, chalked out a path from which we had never meant to deviate, namely, to preserve that calm, even tenor of mind, which arises from a conviction, that satire is the best antidote to folly, and contempt the only punishment for such vices as are within the verge of our judicial code; yet where the thread of our narrative compels us to delineate characters so abandoned, we could not complete their outline, even in the hasty sketch thus given, without being betrayed into a warmth of censure not altogether consistent with the placid dignity of historians.

The period already mentioned had nearly

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elapsed since the return of Lady B—— and her male friends, when the noble person, to whose partiality she was indebted for a number of her conveniences, began to recollect the expensive establishment he was supporting in Norton Street, for the gratification of a faithless ingrate. Burdened with the care of this one idea, he was resolved upon getting rid of the weight of it, as soon as he could; and for this purpose, arrived one morning rather mal-a-propos, before the lady and her chere amie were in a condition to receive so noble a visitor. He was let in as soon as he rang the kitchen bell, by the strange cook, who happened to be up; but notwithstanding his lordship, sans ceremony, ran up stairs, as soon almost as he enquired for Lady B—— of the servant (who was confused at so unexpected a visit), our adventurer was sufficiently upon his guard not to subject the lady to the disgrace of a second surprise. For happening to awake when his lordship's horse stopped at the door, he had just time enough to retreat to his own

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chamber above stairs, with his clothes in his hand, when he heard the door open; where having dressed himself, and being provided with weapons no man better knew the use of, patiently waited the event, which the reader will find faithfully related in the eighth Chapter of this our third volume.

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CHAP. VIII.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RAGE AND COURAGE EXEMPLIFIED, AND THE CONSEQUENCE—THE GENEROUS CONDUCT OF LADY B——; WITH OTHER MATTERS OF LESS IMPORTANCE.

AS soon as his lordship gained admittance, which he did by ringing the kitchen-bell, he enquired hastily of the servant where his mistress was, and scarcely waiting for an answer, rushed by him in the passage, and ran up stairs; and not finding the lady in her study, which she sometimes repaired to very early, he flew to the two-pair-of-stairs door, and, without calling for admission, after several efforts, he succeeded in bursting it open. At which the lady set up such a scream as alarmed the house; and the first person

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who came to her assistance, in his slippers and night-gown, was her gallant, with a cocked pistol in his hand. Enraged to the last degree at this conduct of Lady B——, who affected not to know him, he demanded of our adventurer who he was that durst menace the master of that house? The other answered, in a firm tone, by commanding him instantly to withdraw from the lady's room, or he was a dead man. The lady, who acted her part during this altercation admirably, by swooning, crying, and other arts peculiar to those of the sex who are troubled with hysterics, was presently surrounded by all the female servants in the house, to none of whom was his lordship known but the housekeeper. To her, therefore, his lordship appealed for evidence of his being master of the house; which, in imitation of her mistress, she flatly denied; and the confounded peer was fain to march down stairs, followed by his rival, who desired him to go into the parlour; and his lordship very reluctantly complied. Our adventurer immediately locked the door, and then gave his lord-

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ship to understand, that it was his intention to send for a constable, and bring him before a magistrate to answer for his conduct; and was proceeding towards the bell for that purpose, when his prisoner begged a parley for half an hour.

This, with some reluctance, being granted, he began, in quite an altered tone, to declare the ungrateful treatment he had received from Lady B—— had quite distracted him; and that, not content with eloping to the Continent during his absence, she had, he was well informed, entertained the same fellow in his house ever since her return. He then declared his name and title, offering to convince any person of honour that what he asserted was true: and, finding his rival considerably softened by this address, he began to assume a loftier air; and demanded by what right he was confined in his own house, and whether it was the intention of all the parties he had seen, to aid in his assassination? But he assured them, that if such a foul deed was attempted, they could not possibly escape as his

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servant would very soon be alarmed at any longer delay, and most certainly have the house searched for him; and at that instant the servant passed by the window, leading his master's horse.

Our adventurer told him, that such ill-grounded suspicions were as weak as they were false; and that, so far from any restraint being used, longer than they could procure a peace-officer, they wished for nothing more than an appeal to the laws of their country, from which they were sure his rank, if he really was what he asserted, would not protect him in so flagrant a breach of all law, as that which he had wickedly committed. "But," continued he, "if the story is really true, you have cancelled all obligations by your ungentleman-like behaviour; and therefore I, as the near relative of the lady, insist upon one of two modes, and the choice shall rest with you, either to proceed directly before a magistrate, or give me the satisfaction of a gentleman, for having thus outraged every principle of gallantry, and respect to the

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lady;" and so saying, without waiting for a reply, he presented the noble lord with a pistol, and, unlocking the parlour-door, proceeded to the door which led into the garden; which he had no sooner entered, than he heard the door suddenly clapped to behind him; when, turning round the handle, he found it had been bolted after him.

Surprised at so dastardly a trick, from a person of high rank, he began to make a loud noise at the garden-door, in order to pursue the fugitive peer, when Lady B—— threw up her window, and seeing him thus shut out, and a pistol in his hand, guessed at the cause, which made her laugh heartily. When the housekeeper opened the door, they found the pistol in the window, close by the garden-door, where his lordship had laid it when he bolted his antagonist out.

Our adventurer now proceeded to dress himself; and just as they were laughing at the morning's adventure, over their coffee,

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hearing a noise on the stairs, he proceeded to the door to learn the occasion, when, just as he opened it, he was seized by the collar, by an ill-looking fellow; and as he was in the act of striking him with his fist, another seized him by the wrists, while the first produced his warrant, and with it a loaded pistol, telling him, if he behaved like a gentleman, he should be indulged with a coach, and if not he must take the consequence.

Lady B——, who had flown to his assistance, having seen the warrant, begged of the men to have a moment's patience, and she would herself attend in company with the gentleman, who now declared his readiness, having understood from the terriers of justice, who became extremely civil when they heard the lady talk so reasonably, as to promise them something handsome for their trouble and indulgence, that the warrant had been granted at the request of the noble peer already mentioned. Lady B——, wishing to speak to the gentleman, drew him to the window, and be-

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gan to whisper something about her being determined to go with them, which the quick-sighted gentlemen perceiving, begged them to converse freely for twenty minutes, and then very politely walked down stairs into the parlour, to wait for their company. The lady now steadily persisted in her resolution of appearing before their worships at Bow Street, and entreated her friend to make the most of the opportunity thus afforded him to make his escape, which he might readily effect by dropping down from one of the windows of the study into the garden, the gate at the end of which led to the road called Portland: she then gave him the key of it, urging him by every thing that was dear to be gone immediately. With much reluctance he obeyed; and, from a conviction of the possibility of his being recognised by some of his old acquaintance, he concluded, her advice was not to be despised. After embracing, and having appointed a place for meeting at and corresponding, as soon as possible, our hero descended from the study-window, and open-

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ing the garden-gate, which gave him a passage into the road, locked it after him, threw the key into the garden, crossed into Portland Place through Harley Fields, and, passing by the Jews' Harp house, proceeded to Chalk Farm very leisurely; where having taken some refreshment, he reached Hampstead; and at the tavern called the Spaniards, procured a private room, where calling for a pen and ink, he bespoke dinner for himself and a lady, whom he expected about five o'clock, and, after writing a few lines, went out to amuse himself with a walk upon the heath. Here we shall leave him to his cogitations, and return to the generous lady B——, whom we left with the agents of justice.

The well-timed application of five guineas, had operated so effectually upon the disposition of these necessary ministers of power, that they extended the indulgence of twenty minutes to a full hour and a half; during which time Lady B—— had not been idle. As soon as she saw from the back window, her friend had safely got

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over Portland Road, she dispatched the coachman through the garden, where he found the key, with a pressing summons for the painter to attend her immediately, upon business of the last importance. The messenger very fortunately happened to find him at home; and as he lived no farther off than Mary-le-bone Lane, he was with the lady long before the expiration of the time last granted by the gentlemen of Bow Street. Being arrived at the garden, Lady B——, who had kept watch at the window, slipped softly down stairs and let him in; and the painter, having taken off his shoes, they got up stairs without giving the smallest alarm to the vigilant officers, who were amusing themselves, at the front-parlour window, with stagging several ladies of fortune, whose carriages drew up to the door of a celebrated sybil, that delivered her oracular responses from a temple of secresy directly opposite Lady B——'s.

Mr. Carmine the painter was briefly informed of the escape of his friend, and the

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circumstance which occasioned it; and as there was no time to be lost, proposed his personating, and appearing at Bow Street for him, the worst consequences of which she would be responsible for, as the charge in the warrant was only for an assault. Carmine, much to the credit of his profession, who in general are too much accustomed to flattery to recollect any such virtue as sincere friendship, consented, with the greatest alacrity, to run every risk, in the service of so good a friend, and so worthy a benefactress; and, being furnished with a suit of the same clothes (black) which our adventurer was taken in by the officers, his person, age, and stature so nearly resembled his friend, that it required a very minute inspection to discover the difference, and that was chiefly in the tone of their voices.

Thus equipped in the apparel of his friend, when Lady B—— saw him she had no doubt of the success of her scheme, and they walked down stairs into the front parlour, where the gentlemen hoped they had

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not hurried themselves, as the magistrates would not attend till near one o'clock, and they had still more than an hour good, as the drive was no more than fifteen minutes. The lady, however, had no inclination to become a customer for any longer indulgence, and therefore rang the bell for the carriage, which had been in readiness all the morning, and presently drove up to the door. A difficulty now arose about the propriety of the lady driving to the office in her own carriage; for as to riding in it with them, it was out of the question; our traps knew their interest, and their distance much better, and declared, so far from mentioning their objection through any doubt of the honour of the lady and her friend, they were content to let them go before, or they themselves would set out first, and rely upon their appearance in time; but still they advised a hackney-coach. And the lady being convinced at last, thought it most prudent to send for one; and then being requested to stop at the entrance of the theatre, in Bow Street, from whence the officers were in duty bound to attend

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them to the bench, they departed as they had proposed, each taking a different route for Bow Street, to prevent scandal in the neighbourhood of the lady.

Matters being thus adjusted, the lady and her confederate fully justified the sagacity and confidence of the officers, and were punctual in stopping at the place appointed, where they were soon after joined by the said gemmen, one of whom preceded, and had the passage-door opened against his companion brought up the rear; and by thispre caution, dictated, by a knowledge of their business, the vulgar multitude, that were then assembling in crowds to get a peep at the noted Jerry Avershaw, of desperate memory, who was brought up that day for re-examination.

Our prisoners were conducted up stairs, where persons of condition are indulged by the discriminating magistrates of this office with a private examination. After waiting a short time, the principal magistrate arrived, and was followed by the noble peer,

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and the business of the office commenced with all due solemnity. The noble peer being called upon to make his complaint, stood forward; in very expressive and forcible terms he described the assault, and challenge, which he had received from the person now before their worships, to whom he was a total stranger, never having seen him before; and all this violence on the part of the prisoner was without the smallest provocation. The luminous knight who presided as acting magistrate, now enquired about what time in the morning this affray began, and where? The nobleman answered—"About half past seven this morning, at a lady's house in Norton Street, who was his particular friend, and whom he would have brought forward on the present occasion, but from motives of delicacy."

Now, it may be necessary to acquaint the reader, that the lady in question had prevailed upon one of the conductors hither, to allow her to wait in an

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adjacent room, till he received a hint from the prisoner to call her; and that, when his lordship was stating his complaint, he was not inattentive to the persons of his auditory. Not being able to recognise his once dear Lady B—— amongst the number, he concluded, that which chiefly determined him to the step which occasioned the present investigation, namely, a firm opinion of her being either ashamed or afraid to appear, was well founded. The magisterial knight, having made some very pertinent, though warm remarks, upon the enormity of such an outrage upon no less a person than a member of our hereditary peerage, a description of personages who formed a part of our glorious and much-envied constitution; and, in the heat of his zeal for our English nobility, was about to commit the prisoner, without recollecting it was a bailable offence; or, what was sometimes of very little consequence to this expounder of our laws, without even hearing the prisoner. His brother magistrate, very fortunately for our son of Apelles,

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happening to put him in mind of that part of his duty, he at length deigned to ask the insolent fellow his name, place of abode, and a never-failing interrogatory, which it must be confessed, to the no small honour of our knight that used it, was often a matter of puzzling difficulty to the gentlemen who were generally examined here, and frequently upset the best-connected stories. Now this question was neither more nor less than—"How do you live, fellow?" And although one audacious thief was known to answer—"By eating and drinking, please your worship"—it is well known the justice never would allow that to be a satisfactory answer; and we can assure our readers he was not pleased with it. In the present instance, he received a polite and direct answer; and the prisoner was then desired to inform the bench what he had to say in his defence.

Carmine modestly answered, that so far from any part of the nobleman's charge being founded upon any violence commit-

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ted on his person, he never before had the honour of seeing him; and as to the hour mentioned in his lordship's charge, he could prove that he had not been out of his house in Mary-le-bone Lane that morning till near eleven o'clock: that he had but just visited the lady, in his professional round, whom he had the honour to call one of his pupils, when he was seized by two men, who talked about a warrant, which the lady advised him to appear to, and begged she might be forthwith sent for; and at that moment he turned round, and the officer, in obedience to the signal, went out, and returned with the beautiful Lady B——. Whilst their worships and his lordship were conferring in a low tone about the singularity of this affair, when the peer, who had several times cast his eyes upon the prisoner in seeming doubt, happened to encounter the bright eyes of the lady, who had just taken her place by the side of the prisoner. Disconcerted by this angelic appearance, and confounded with the likeness of the prisoner, and the difference of

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his voice, and that which still thundered in his ears defiance, he was so perplexed, that when the magistrate spoke to him, he neither heard or answered.

In this stage of the business, the knight cast his eyes upon the all-subduing charms of the lady; and in no instance that hath yet come to our knowledge, were her matchless glances more triumphant than upon this occasion. Nor were the eyes of the select few wh owere admitted to this examination less fixed upon this lovely object, than the knight's brother magistrates.

The prisoner now addressed the bench, and begged the testimony of the lady might be admitted in his favour. This request was directly complied with; and, for the honour of impartial justice, we believe this would not have been refused, had she been the reverse of what she was. The effects of her beauty were admirably seconded by the harmony of the

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sweetest voice; and she related the circumstance of his lordship's violence and brutality in such terms of reproach as became the chastest mouth in the kingdom; and declared, but for the manly conduct of her relation, whose absence she regretted, as he was that very morning obliged to set off to join his regiment in Ireland, she must have been a victim to it. She then related the dastardly conduct of his lordship, in bolting the garden-door upon his antagonist, instead of giving him satisfaction for an insult upon his relation, in terms of reproach mixed with a considerable share of wit and humour.

She next bore such testimony to the truth of the painter's account, as completely exonerated him from every charge advanced by the peer, to the complete satisfaction of all the persons present, except one. And, in conclusion, she begged to be admitted to swear the peace against his lordship, from whose violence she had now every thing to dread, as her protector was absent upon his duty.

The tables being thus completely turned

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upon his lordship, who did not offer one syllable in contradiction of what the lady had asserted; and indeed if he had, the prepossession in favour of beauty and female eloquence was too powerful to be removed. He was, therefore, compelled to give security for keeping the peace; and was given to understand, as a further consolation, that an action would be instantly commenced against him by the painter, for detention from his professional duty, and disgrace that might attach to his character, from having been examined at Bow Street.

The lady and her friend were then acquainted that he was at liberty; and having made their obedience to the bench, departed, followed by the applause of all who had witnessed their triumph.

The officers received a further remuneration for their civility; and our son of the palette escorted the lady to the hackney-coach, and drove directly for Tottenham Court Road; and, for fear of being

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dogged, they discharged the coach, and walked on to the Adam and Eve, where they got into the Hampstead stage, and joined their friend an hour before he expected them; and a more joyous trio seldom met, than dined at the Spaniards upon this triumphant occasion.

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CHAP. IX.

THE LITTLE VENGEANCE OF A GREAT MAN —THE SPEEDY ISSUE OF A LEGAL PROCEEDING—AND THE FORTUNATE DISCOVERY OF THE MUCH-REGRETTED PICTURE.

WHILE the victorious party were enjoying themselves at Hampstead, from whence they did not return till a late hour, the peer, who felt all the effects of the disgrace and ridicule he had brought upon himself, was determined upon revenging the insult upon the lady, whose conduct he persuaded himself was the sole and primary cause of all that had happened. Thus determined, he proceeded to an action truly worthy of himself, with the double view of distressing Lady B——, and of getting her wholly into his power; and the use he would

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have made of that power may be inferred from the means he had recourse to, in order to accomplish that meritorious end.

Early the next morning after his defeat, he called upon a worthy upholsterer, who had furnished the house in Norton Street, of which he was the original landlord, and had granted a lease for the full term, at the low rent of thirty pounds per annum, in consideration of five hundred pounds paid him by his lordship; and which lease had been made out in her ladyship's name, and given her by the said peer, in the infancy of their amour. This honest tradesman, finding that his lordship's discourse tended to a broad hint of deserting his favourite, without settling his last bill for elegant articles furnished since the fire, and that all the reparations which were done under his inspection, and for which he was become responsible, in consequence of the workmen allowing him to deduct two and a half per cent. from their bills, more than the usual allowance to persons who can recommend small tradesmen like these to a

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good job. In short, the said hint given by his lordship, found way to the only feeling his enemies or friends agreed he was ever known to possess, and that was, his own immediate interest; and he promptly enquired if his honour did not mean to settle his account? And in a tremor of extreme doubt, waited for the peer's reply. "Mr. Furnish," replied the peer, "I have taken the trouble of calling upon you, to prevent any loss from a transaction where my name is concerned; and, after warning you to take care of yourself, if in a few days every article of furniture in the house should be sold, and the parties abscond with the produce, be assured I shall not be responsible for a shilling."

To this Mr. Furnish very reasonably answered, that upon the credit, and sometimes by the verbal order of his lordship, more than two-thirds of the goods had been sent in; and that what had been done since, was also upon the faith he had in his honour; and having no directions to withhold credit, it was natural for him to

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abide by the general commission he had the honour of receiving from his lordship's own mouth, the extent of whose bounty it would ill become him to circumscribe. "To make short of this matter, Sir," said his lordship, interrupting him, "what is the amount of your last bill? If you can satisfy me within fifty, or even a hundred, I shall then know what measures to pursue, in order to bring this cursed affair to a speedy issue."

Mr. Furnish flew to his counting-house, and returned in a trice with a ponderous ledger, the crowded pages of which contained precious matter and food for the practitioners of the law; when, turning to his lordship's account, he began to mumble over the items of some part of the account: but seeing the impatience of the peer, he began—"The amount, I see, of your lordship's account here posted, since the last settlement, up to the present month of September, is one thousand eight hundred and ninety-seven pounds six shillings, errors excepted. There are also a few articles

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not yet posted, which, together with the interest, if your lordship takes the full scope of a twelvemonth——." Here the peer again interposed—"The sum in gross I find is, then, under a couple of thousands, Mr. Furnish—damn your interest and conscience together, in fixing me with such a sum—now, Sir, hear me—take what measures you please to recover the above sum; but if the goods are sold, and you imagine I shall ever pay you one shilling, you will find yourself most egregiously mistaken. Therefore take care of yourself; and if you secure your own property, whatever deficiency may be in striking the balance between us, I shall hold myself bound to discharge; but upon no other condition shall I trouble myself in the affair. You know my custom; and if my future favours are of any consideration, your conduct in this business will determine where they shall be disposed." Having concluded the latter words with a peculiar emphasis, he left the upholsterer without waiting for a reply.

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Now, Mr. Furnish, though one of the most obstinate of his profession, where his interest was not involved, knew very well how to trim; and having something of the envy which some tradesmen are now and then guided by, in his composition, rather than lose his lordship's business, which he knew a neighbouring brother of the same calling had been long striving to obtain, he lost no time in improving upon his lordship's hint. The very next day, therefore, he applied to one of the needy retainers, and disgracers of the profession, and took the liberty, under the pretence of a friendly visit to Lady B——, to walk into her house with an execution.

The lady upon this occasion behaved with great spirit, and told the upholsterer, what every body acquainted with him knew almost as well as himself, namely, that it was possible the whole tribe of imposing tradesmen might produce his equal in chicane and extortion, but it was impossible for any to surpass him. She urged, that his lordship was the person liable, as the goods

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and house, to this worthy furnisher's knowledge, were all given to her; but the number of gifts from the same generous donor, as had fallen within this industrious man's knowledge, in all which he was more or less concerned, he chose never to trouble himself with the recollection of, and the lady might have saved herself the mortification of being sneered at by her late most obsequious servant.

No sooner were these engines of litigation set in motion, than the work of havoc and ruin began; and upon this, as most other occasions of distress, the sufferer had no cause to complain of the "Law's delay;" and Lady B——'s elegant household furniture was advertised for sale, in less than a fortnight, as taken in execution by the sheriff of Middlesex. It is true, indeed, that they substituted the hacknied phraseology of a lady of fashion in the advertisements, for the honourable person's name; and this delicacy proceeded more from the laudable cunning of the attorney, who rightly judged that some friend might see

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the advertisement and generously pay for the lady, and thus deprive his worthy co-adjutor of his commission, and recommend the sale to his own acquaintance; who, notwithstanding his being newly emerged from the humble situation of an errand-boy, and before he had been six months exalted to the licenced rostrum, had supplied his friend, the lawyer, with as many actions. This early proof of laudable industry in one so young, was a tolerable presage of thriving maturity; and his friends hailed the dawning of such brilliant prospects as must crown his future exertions with the most enviable success. We would fain here warn our readers against an error which has long obtained, and if we are not mistaken, is still prevalent amongst the native inhabitants of this wonderful little island; namely, that certain qualifications are necessary for persons who are designed for public employments; and under this mistaken idea, it is incredible what sums are expended by the silly, fond parents of our youth, in useless education and trifling accomplishments. Now,

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although we admit that a naturally good understanding may, and often doth rise superior to any obstacle, and that instances have fallen within our own knowledge, in the very profession we have now under consideration; when a stock of common sense, aided by observation and natural eloquence, hath never yet been equalled, even where the best education has been bestowed, and a fund of knowledge acquired to inspire the possessor with a sufficient portion of confidence for the situation. But with respect to the unexampled genius to whose care the sale of Lady B——'s elegant property was trusted, he has commenced his brilliant career, unencumbered by any of the requisites for such a profession, which the mistaken world have long considered to be indispensable. And nobly despising all the trammels of judgment, eloquence, and taste, with one single advantage resulting from the universal parent of devotion, ignorance; is enabled to dash through any difficulty that a paucity of knowledge or intellect may throw in his way. So much are thy votaries, O dullnes!. indebted to

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effrontery, that success even in the most trying situations, is likely to attend the man blessed with a competent stock of sheer impudence. By this eminently qualified orator were the goods and chattels of the lovely B—— disposed of, and the success of the sale was in proportion; the amount not exceeding fourteen hundred pounds, for which the noble peer had paid at least three thousand. But as no man understood their value better than he who sold them, and as he expressed himself at the sale, that nothing would hurt him so much as for the brokers to carry away a single lot a-piece, from the degrading circumstance of Lady B——'s elegant things being exposed amongst old grates and fenders. He consequently became the chief purchaser; though the partiality of the auctioneer did not escape censure, in knocking down lots so precipitately to several ladies and gentlemen, for many of which they would have given double, he was certainly not to blame upon this account; for every one to whom he was thus partial, belonged to Mr. Furnish. And as the articles might be

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said not to have left the trade, we thought it but justice to the gentleman of the hammer, that he did not favour any strange lady or gentleman, to the injury of the knock-out system.

Amongst the rubbish which the brokers bought, and in truth they had no opportunity of getting any other for the foregoing reasons, was one lot in which were a few garden chairs, and a large water butt which stood under one of the windows of Lady B——'s study, and held the rain-water from a spout that received all that fell from the back part of the house, and was generally used by the gardener for watering a great number of various flowers and roots which were in pots, and ranged on stages one row above another, the whole length and both sides of the garden. The lady's journey to the continent, and subsequent events, prevented her from hiring a person for that department, in the room of him who left it in consequence of the fire; so that the butt was nearly full of putrified stagnant water when the brokers bought it;

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and the auctioneer, whose organs of smell were remarkably delicate, insisted upon the water not being emptied till all the ladies were off the premises after the sale was over. The trade, as usual, having dined together, and settled their knock-out, this lot fell to the share of a very poor member of the fraternity; and, in consequence of the filthy water in the butt, none present would quit their enjoyment to assist him in getting the butt out, which happened to be a very good one, and the poor fellow living at a great distance, wished to remove it that afternoon. He was equally unsuccessful with the porters belonging to the sale, and it was nearly dusk before he could procure a cart to take his bargain home; the man who owned the cart happened to have some portion of kindness in his composition, and did not mind exerting his strength a little for those who needed it, without extorting any thing for labour not bargained for. With the assistance of this man, they made shift to empty the butt after much labour, for there was neither spicket nor cock by which they

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could draw it off. This being effected, they loaded the cart, and the lot was safely got home; where, the first thing the broker did was to begin his operation of scouring and cleansing the butt, in order to make the most of it. Having procured a birch-broom, he began the operation; and throwing in a pailful of scalding water, and a quantity of sand, began to work; but, meeting with some opposition, and hearing the noise of something which the broom could just stir, he got a light, and returned to his job in the yard; where, laying the tub on its side, he discovered a richly inlaid mahogany cabinet. Feeling it pretty weighty, the poor man's heart began to dilate, and he thanked kind Providence for this unexpected prize, for he had no question of its being well stocked with jewels, or money; leaving his work thus fortunately began, he returned to the only room he had, where slept three healthy children unconscious of their father's good fortune. He there wiped and cleansed his cabinet, which was something scratched by the application of the birch-broom and sand; a dif-

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ficulty now occurred, and that was how to satisfy his expectations respecting what this curious piece of workmanship contained. All the keys he could find were employed to effect this desirable object, but in vain; and the idea of injuring the workmanship by force alarmed his fears of injuring the sale of what he knew was certainly worth two or three guineas; and of the contents he could but hope, which he knew from experience to be a very unprofitable article of dependence. His wife, during this pause of irresolution intruded, and no sooner beheld the cause of his fixed attention, than she snatched it out of his hand, and began to examine it, without any enquiry respecting the means by which he had acquired its possession. The ingenuity of the fair sex in most puzzling cases has been long famed, and the portion of it which fell to the share of this female was exerted with no abatement of the general esteem with which our's have been accustomed to view them for that advantage. She, therefore, reminded her husband of a circumstance, that appeared so obvious

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when she mentioned it, that she cursed his stupidity for not hitting upon a scheme so natural, and immediately within his own province. Having no sooner mentioned her means of satisfying their hopeful curiosity than she prepared to put it into execution; and for that purpose slipped on her hat and cloak, went out, and in ten minutes returned with her brother, an ingenious lock-smith, who lived in the neighbourhood, and whose ingenuity was more than a match for all the inventions of the last century, to secure property by locks upon various mechanical principles, and sanctioned by a thousand patents. This curious artist soon accomplished the much-wished-for purpose; and, to the utter disappointment of all parties, instead of gold, jewels, or such objects of general rapacity, brought forth to their hopeless vision the identical resemblance of our original gem. That precious favourite of Lady B——, the loss of which she regretted more than all the splendid furniture of her late elegant residence, and which she, and all who gave her an account of the accident upon her ar-

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rival in England, concluded, must have suffered destruction in the conflagration. The hopes of the poor man and his spouse were now completely sunk, when an observation from the lock-smith somewhat revived their spirits; and this was, that such expence, and such a lock, was never employed to secure any but an uncommon production; and that for his part he should not be surprised if that bit of copper produced more than twice its weight if it were even solid gold.

The ignorance of the honest broker, of so common an article as pictures have become lately amongst them, at a period no longer ago than seven years, may appear something problematic, and possibly may give some offence to this respectable body, or at least to those of them who are now allowed to be very sagacious connoisseurs by the rest of their brethren. Now as we profess to have the greatest veneration for the improvement of the human understanding, and for the plebeian rank of citizens who are become thus enlightened, we shall

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take this opportunity of informing them, that at the period already mentioned, speculators were not so sanguine in their search after Titians and Rembrandts as they have been since; consequently, the cellars and garrets of brokers were not so well stocked with the works of these great men as they have become of late; so that they were upon that account destitute of the valuable instruction of such connoisseurs as now frequently take the amusement of picture-hunting, amongst old rags, rusty fenders, and all the interesting lumber which in general conceal some chef-d'œuvre of the old schools. The astonishing bargains run down in this glorious and profitable sport we shall have occasion to relate in the course of these Memoirs, and hope the reason we have here given for the ignorance of an honest plebeian in the art of picture-dealing, may be thought satisfactory.

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CHAP. X.

CONTAINING SEVERAL INSTANCES OF THE KNOWLEDGE AND ADDRESS OF SOME PROFOUND JUDGES OF THE FINE ARTS, AND ORIGINAL ANECDOTES OF DES-CHONG-FONG, A CHINESE ADEPT, AND ONE OF THE EMBASSADORS TO THE GREAT MOGUL, AND HIS FRIEND CHEVALIER MAGUILPH.

BEFORE we enter upon matters of greater importance, it may be necessary to inform our readers, that after the sale in Norton Street, where our picture was so fortunately recovered from its watery abode, where it was thrown in the confusion of the fire; the produce of the sale was so far from satisfying the rapacity of the worthy persons concerned, that what their sagacity anticipated, actually came to pass. In con-

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sequence of this prudent anticipation, a writ had been provided, and poor Lady B——, whose charms might have melted the most obdurate heart, was arrested for the balance of the account due to Mr. Furnish after the sale. The usual practice of distressing the unfortunate at houses where every thing absorbs like a spunge, was not forgotten on this occasion; and before her ladyship was removed to the bench, her purse felt a very considerable diminution of its contents. Throughout all her troubles she was not deserted by her favourite, and his friend the painter, the latter of whom had felt the genial influence of her well-timed bounty, and by the handsome sum which at once set him upon his feet: in the garb of a gentleman he found employment, where before he could only experience contempt. In short, by his talents and industry, they were prevented from feeling the horrors of poverty, when its visitation must ever come with double pressure, and when the privation of liberty is the grave of every hope.

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We shall here close the scene of misery for a time, to contemplate the brighter prospects of the broker's family, made happy for the present, in idea at least, being highly elated with the favourable opinion their relation taught them to entertain of a gem thus almost miraculously thrown into their possession. After a number of consultations, the smith recollected a relation of his, who was then serving his time with a draftsman of some notoriety at the west end of the town, whose judgment in these matters was allowed to be very great, especially by all his acquaintance. "And to my knowledge," quoth this ingenious son of Vulcan, "Tom has often carried his sketches, and such like, to gentlemen's houses, very great gentlemen indeed; and Tom swears downright, that his master never gives one of them a lesson under a golden guinea; this is poz." No further confirmation being necessary to those who were so pleased with believing; a direction to this great artist was forthwith given the broker, and instructions to ask for Tom,

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who was a very great favourite, and bid fair to rival his master.

The next morning the broker set out with his prize, which he wrapped up in an ironing blanket, leaving the cabinet with his wife, and orders to sell at such a price because, as he justly observed, that one article must pay for the lot. Being arrived at the great man's house, he, agreeably to his instructions, made the necessary enquiry for Tom, who, when he came down stairs, and saw the appearance of the man who enquired for him so familiarly, felt all the pride of the artist, ready to impede any farther communion with so near an acquaintance. But our broker no sooner produced the picture, and mentioned his relation, the smith, than Tom changed his opinion, and recollected several picture-dealers who were very shabby, we mean in appearance. The man was accordingly shewn into the parlour, while Tom ran up stairs to the painting-room open mouthed, to tell his master of the wonderful picture he had seen. The master, who was really

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an enthusiast in his profession, no sooner beheld this master-piece of the art, than he exclaimed—" A morsel of perfection, worthy the pencil of Reynolds, sir! what colouring—what a pencil! here Tom, here's a group of angels—dam-me if they are not equal to my own! and if this Raphael were now alive, I'll be d——d if any thing could acquit him of the theft;—don't you recollect, you thick-headed dog, the group of angels in my large drawing of the apotheosis of the Virgin, that which West admired so much? Lord, what would he give for this little diamond:—here's your cast of drapery—here's expression;—what determined boldness;—O what a treasure!" The poor broker listened to this rhapsody with all the attention of a fond parent who hears his son's tutor, at Christmas vacation, launch out in praise of his son's improvements in a science he does not understand, no more than the language in which these encomiums were delivered. After the artist had consumed more than an hour in admiration of this treasure of the art, the broker begged as a favour to his relation, he might

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tell him whereabouts to ask, and if he would be so good as to tell him who was likely to become a purchaser. The artist replied, that he ought to be d——d if he asked less than two hundred guineas, and double d——d if he took so little as one hundred and thirty; and promised to give him a line to a brother artist who was more in the habit of dealing; for his own part, he dealt in nothing but the produce of his own talents; and to exhibit at one time a proof of his gratitude and superior powers as an artist, brought the broker into his shew-room, or gallery, where he began to descant upon the merit of the several productions that should one day establish a lasting monument in the annals of fame equal to any of his predecessors. In the midst of one of those eloquent remarks, the broker recollected the promise of a line from our artist to another; and rather abruptly putting the other in mind of such promise, the artist exclaimed, contemptuously biting his nether lip—"Gods! how the profession is degraded, when a man of taste is compelled to submit such things to the vulgar

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optics of such plebeians, because the envy of his brethen will not suffer their judgment to see and be convinced of his superior merit.' Here he stamped in some degree of rage mixed with pity, for the occasion of this degrading sally of his resentment; and eyeing the broker askance, wrote the direction of his brother artist, and then left the poor man in a state of complete confusion, to gaze upon the wonders that surrounded him. Tom, however, came very seasonably to his relief, and told him, as a friend, not to abate a guinea of his price, as the artist kept his coach and a set of servants, and could well afford to pay for it.

At the elegant house of this great artist our elated dealer presently arrived, for the lofty style and manner of the master of Tom gave him a sort of relish for the arts he had never before experienced; and the sum he was told by master and man not to abate as the price of the picture, completed the mania of dealing thus hopefully begun. To this house, by the invariable orders of its owner, a picture was always an un-

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doubted passport; and provided a sitter had engaged the attention of their master, each servant had his orders to treat whoever brought a picture with plenty of civility; that being a very cheap and plentiful article in the family, and the only thing, according to the invariable maxim and example of their master, any servant dare give away. The difficulty therefore was, not how to gain admittance to this liberal encourager of the arts, but how to get away without leaving a picture behind, either for a very small remuneration, or to suffer seven or eight of his friends or brother artists to analyze and retain as many of its beauties as possible free of expence. The collection of this elegant practitioner of flattering portraits had been gleaned from the ignorant persons who, like our broker, became possessed of pictures in a variety of cheap ways which chance so often determines. From these possessors, and at a very moderate price, this tasteful artist had for a long time driven a most profitable traffic. Having seen our boasted gem, and examined it with more than a dozen magnifiers, of more

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or less power, he enquired of the broker what he meant to have for it, telling him, what indeed was the truth, but which he knew no more of than the great cham of tartary; for it is the constant practice of all dealers of eminence to depreciate the article they want to purchase; and no more general term of reproach has yet been discovered for sinking the demand of an ignorant seller, than for such men as trading artists to call every old picture offered for their purchase a copy. The new adventurer in the black art having mentioned two hundred guineas, received such a significant frown from this great professor as was sufficient to confound any but a veteran of the craft; and being asked if he was seriously disposed to part with it, to mention some price within the compass of reason. Our broker calling to mind what Tom had advised, repeated his price with increased confidence, and told him he was too well informed of the value of it to abate any thing of the moderate price he had asked. While he was waiting for the reply of our artist, three more of the profession were introduced, and the

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picture was immediately submitted for their determination; but, after several very artful conjectures, these gentlemen artists, who were not dealers, pronounced it an original, but by which of the Italian masters they could not determine. The master of the house then took down the address of the broker; and just as he followed him down stairs, his carriage drove up to the door, and he had but just time to make him the most liberal offer he was ever known to make a small dealer in his life, and that was five guineas. The broker, nettled at this great man's contempt for the opinion of Tom and his master, told him his arms on the coach pannels was worth more than that, but mayhap he had never paid for them, and so departed in complete dudgeon.

Now although the immense difference between the price set by one artist, and that offered by the other, would seem to imply a similar proportion of difference in their opinion of its merit, yet this really was not the case; and had the artist who offered thus liberally, been so fortunate as

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to purchase it, he would have increased the sum our broker demanded at least one hundred guineas more, which would have been a sanction to any purchaser, as buying from a man of his knowledge and taste would effectually stifle every laugh that must otherwise be raised at such egregious folly.

Thus frustrated in his golden hopes, our broker returned with his prize, to the no small uneasiness of his dame, who was anxious to realize the many golden dreams she had fondly cherished, as soon as she had formed them; her husband, on the contrary, slept soundly, contented with the knowledge he had thus acquired at the expence of a day's time, and a long walk without any refreshment. The next day, two gentlemen, under pretence of wanting some articles of furniture, carelessly enquired if he had ever any old pictures fall in his way. The broker answered he had never more than one, and that was by him still, but believed there were few such amongst all the trade; and by their earnest desire, he shewed them this capital effort of the art;

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they gave him to understand, with the same indifference they had enquired, that it was by no means what he had been led to believe it was, and offered him two guineas, to which the indignant possessor would not deign an answer.

After a variety of ingenious manœuvres, the poor broker became tired of his treasure, which had been the occasion of great anxiety and disappointment; and being distressed for a sum of money, he was desired to apply to a very wealthy dealer in the neighbourhood of Leicester Fields, who generously gave him forty guineas for it. The man was satisfied, and, upon reflection, thought himself well paid for all his cares and troubles; and from that moment he subjected himself to a thousand more, by a strange resolution which this trifling success occasioned him to make, and that was no less than to *turn picture dealer*, which being put in practice, in less than two years *turned* him out of doors. Our picture being now in the hands of a man who knew how to send it to market, he bespoke a su-

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perb frame; and, after cleaning it for the first time since its creation, put it in the said frame, and then hung it in a proper light, where it continued to be viewed with envy and admiration, till a price adequate to its merit should remove it. The sum then fixed, was the trifling one of five hundred guineas, and the print after it was sought, and found after much pains, and produced as a sufficient voucher of its original merit. Many were the commissions which individuals of the profession had from their sapient customers for this brilliant so inestimable, and many were the stratagems laid to depreciate its value, but all without effect; for although these were the arts practised by some of the most profound adepts in the science of picturecraft, who had been long accustomed to turn old canvas and paint into pure gold, yet on this occasion the whole arcana of the art was excited in vain; and why? because the person upon whom they endeavoured to operate was an adept too. Several advantageous changes, and handsome sums along with these changes, were offered, to induce a barter, but

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the possessor was inflexible. Thus determined, our picture remained in perfect ease and security for more than two years, when a circumstance occurred which once more subjected it to those mundane vicissitudes to which all its possessors are liable. A near relation of the dealer above mentioned, having a taste for the arts, of which he afforded several proofs at our annual exhibition at Somerset House, was advised to cultivate his genius by travel, and a minute inspection of the great works of those immortal founders of their divine art. This advice, coming from one of the ablest professors the Academy had ever known, and who had himself trodden the very path he now recommended to his pupils, determined our aspiring artist, and he began his tour accordingly.

Having letters of recommendation to those gentlemen upon the continent who had interest sufficient to procure him the privilege of examining and copying the best pictures in the most celebrated galleries, he lost no time in availing himself of

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so advantageous a privilege. Having seen and examined all the wonders of art which once adorned Italy, he returned through the Venetian states, to Brussels, through Germany and France, and returning home through the Netherlands, stopped in Holland, where the beautiful works of the Dutch and Flemish masters amply compensated for the time he bestowed in considering their inimitable style of natural colouring. Being resolved upon seeing the admirable collection of Mr. Hope, he spent several days in admiration of the many chef d'œuvres of that celebrated collection; from thence he went to the Hague, and viewed the very nobleman's gallery where the identical parent of our Guido, then in England, still remained, and which so confounded lady B—— and her friends as before related. This nobleman being in possession of several capital pictures by Rembrandt, which was the style our young student was most partial to, he obtained permission, in consequence of being well recommended, to copy two of the best. During this occupation, the nobleman would

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frequently visit the young artist; and finding him modest and well informed, condescended to pass many hours in familiar conversation with him, and passed several encomiums on his progress in the art. As the work advanced, he became still more pleased with our artist's success, which in so young a practitioner was matter of no small wonder to this liberal encourager of merit, who generously offered him his own price for one of them when finished; but the grateful young man, when he had completed the task, pressed the nobleman's acceptance of it so earnestly, that he at length accepted it, and gave him several sketches of the same master in return. One morning, as he visited the nobleman to thank him for all his polite favours previous to his departure for Amsterdam, in the course of general conversation respecting the arts, the nobleman was pleased to relate the anecdote of the English travellers, and the Guido. The curiosity of our artist, though wound up to the highest pitch at the relation, was restrained by good manners from craving a view of it; he therefore contented himself

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with expressing his admiration of the copy which could deceive an artist, and begged to know the subject; this the nobleman no sooner mentioned, than our young artist declared that a near relation of his was in possession of the original picture when he left London. The nobleman smiling at this, rose from his seat, and beckoned the artist to follow him. Being shewn this uncommon production, that had excited such curiosity and been viewed with such admiration, he was unable to conceal his astonishment; but the cause of this surprise was not the display of such perfection, and he candidly acknowledged to his noble entertainer that it arose from another source. After apologizing for what he dare not any longer suppress, when desired by a person of his rank and of so much goodness; he therefore declared, without further hesitation, that his wonder was caused by a certain conviction of identity, that arose in his mind at the first view of the picture, that it must be that which he saw at his relation's in London, and that nothing but the word of a person of so much honour could have con-

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vinced him of the contrary. He then began to examine it with the eye of an artist; considered the outline, the composition, colouring, expression, the touch, and last of all, the general effect; and after all, pronounced it utterly impossible to be convinced, without a minute investigation of all the parts of the two pictures, which must be accurately compared together to justify any decision. The nobleman expressed a very earnest desire of being the possessor of such an extraordinary production, and commissioned the artist to purchase it, if possible, for a certain sum, which was something less than half the price fixed on it by the artist's relation.

They now returned to the gallery, and found there four well-known amateurs, devouring the beauties of Rubens's magic colouring; one of these, the Chevalier Maguilph, had lately been honoured with knighthood by the Empress Catherine, for producing a beautiful sombre tint, and half tint, from a mixture of japanner's gold size, Scotch snuff, and Venice treacle, which bids

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fair, when judiciously managed for the shadows, to rival all the sooty gloom of the best Rembrandts. Another of the interesting group, and the intimate friend and partner of the chevalier, is the celebrated Mandarin Des-chong-fong, a chinese adept, who has been collecting for several years, in order to furnish a superb gallery, now building for the great Mogul, and is supposed to possess one of the most curious collections gleaned from all quarters of the globe, ever yet exhibited. One unique and glorious bit of antiquity in his rare collection, is the bottom of a China punch-bowl, being a circular piece of transparent porcelain of about twelve inches, painted in the most bewitching colours ever yet seen; the subject is allegorical, and consists of a sow and a litter of pigs, which is beheld with a degree of triumph by a mandarin of the first rank, who points to something like a map of China previous to its conquest by the Tartars; and by a peculiar direction of his eyes towards the animals already mentioned, seems to allude to the prolific virtue of his countrywomen, several of whom are

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squatted down in tiny groups, each having pendant from their necks a bunch of pettitoes; in the centre of the piece is a tremendous figure, not unlike the god Priapus, but with a head the most extravagantly adorned that can well be imagined; indeed the emblems are too gross to admit of a description in these Memoirs; and however fine the allegory dependant upon such hieroglyphics, we must lament, that the ingenuity of so curious a people as the Chinese certainly are, could not devise a more chaste assemblage of images in which to convey a knowledge of their religious mysteries. This unequalled gem is reasonably considered by the Chinese adept, to be the origin of painting, not only of enamel colouring, but all others; and he calculates its antiquity to be several centuries anterior to the flood; nay, his reasons for this conjecture are very specious; and he avers, that this very bowl was that out of which the daughters of Lot made their father drink such copious draughts as produced the founder of the Chinese empire. Be this as it may, the fact is pretty well known, that

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the mandarin employed several ingenious lapidaries to cut away the broken sides of the bowl, so as to recover the bottom, in order to have it superbly framed as it now is; and this, after seven years' labour, was at last completed at a very great expence, and is now justly considered as the eighth wonder of the world. "The other two, continued the nobleman, "are humble retainers of the friends, and are employed in writing elaborate catalogues of the mandarin's collection, which is to be translated into several of the eastern languages, for the use of the library of the great mogul." Our English artist was all gratitude for these biographical sketches of such "renowned collectors;" and being desirous of an acquaintance with such extraordinary characters, was gratified by the obliging nobleman, who introduced him with the utmost politeness. The mandarin and his friend entered into conversation with our young artist in the most gracious manner, in the course of which, they expressed a high veneration for the talents of the English adepts, and were polite enough to allow

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them the second rank amongst the professors of the picturecraft, adding, that they would very soon repair to the capital of universal science, to display their knowledge and complete their collection, from the numberless productions of the art, which they were informed all the rest of the world could not produce the half of. As they walked round the gallery, they cast their eyes upon one of the celebrated Rembrandt's, which had engaged the attention of our young artist, and were extremely lavish in their praise upon his style of colouring, which, although not so brilliant as that of Rubens, they asserted was much more durable, and when judiciously cleaned, as they perceived that was, which now attracted their attention, nothing could equal the freshness and matchless force of his bewitching shadows. Our artist first stared, and then blushed for the judgment of two such connoisseurs; but suppressing very candidly a few emotions of vanity, which is, we believe, inherent in the very nature of all artists, he concluded they were amusing themselves with the supposed ignorance

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of the nobleman and his visitor, who could listen to such praise bestowed upon a raw copy; for as it was hung up in the gallery, and occupied the grand frame of its original parent, nothing was more natural than for them to conclude its owner believed it an original. But this conjecture of our young artist, though very honourable to his candour, did no great credit to his discernment; and the truth is, they were deceived for want of a clever inspection, as the picture was near twelve feet from the ground; and the idea of the nobleman's taste, which was justly celebrated over the continent, did away every idea of a copy finding its way into such a collection. The nobleman, not a little pleased with the compliment paid to the talents of his young friend, and the success of his scheme, suffered them to depart in ignorance of the deception he had practised upon their immaculate judgment. When they were gone he communicated the whole secret to our artist, saying, he delighted in sporting with the judgment of such infallible connoisseurs; and entreated his friend to complete the scheme he had

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just conceived of passing the Guido upon them for a copy, the original of which was in London, whither he knew they were then about to visit. All matters being properly arranged, the nobleman parted with the artist, by insisting on his acceptance of diamond ring as a token of his respect for the talents and good conduct of our young artist, who, on his part, took leave of his munificent patron with sincere regret; and soon after returned to his native home.

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CHAP. XI.

GENERAL REFLECTIONS UPON THE SUBJECT OF THE FINE ARTS—THE ARROGANCE OF THOSE WHO ASSUME THE OFFICE OF CONNOISSEURS—THE FALLIBILITY OF SUCH JUDGES EXEMPLIFIED—AND THE HARVEST REAPED BY ADVENTURERS, AND PICTURE-DEALERS, FROM THAT PROLIFIC SOURCE.

THERE is nothing, perhaps, in the vast range of science, more extraordinary than the agreement of any two of the numerous professors of the craft, as to the essential ingredients of what constitutes a perfect whole in either picture or drawing. And this contrariety of opinion holds with respect to subject, be it historical, landscape, humorous, or even down to the formal portrait. We would here be understood to

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allude to the practice solely, and to that only shall we limit these remarks; for in theory the uniformity of opinion on this subject is perfectly orthodox; and if now and then a little tendency towards novelty should appear in the writings or discourse of a solitary member, the heresy is no sooner broached than it is consigned to merited damnation. Indeed it is to be lamented in this case, as well as the more solemn momentous one of religion, that the professors of each do not confine themselves a little more strictly to justice and truth in the practice of both. We are aware of several objections which an ingenious casuist might wage in favour of a different opinion, and that in our own case, for we humbly crave pardon for what may appear presumptuous, in our touching upon a subject too sublime for our finite comprehension, and which we here humbly resign to the sacred professors of the church militant; we say, the objections which an able casuist might start upon our own ground, might stagger our belief in the certainty of our favourite dogmas. And we are well aware,

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that the admirable lectures of the late much-lamented president of the Royal Academy might be here adduced as containing many instances that bear strongly against us. We know that celebrated painter endeavoured to inculcate an opinion, which a few of the students imbibed, that there was no such thing as genius; and that to be eminent in any profession or science, industry and perseverance were all that were necessary in the students or pupils of this, or any other seminary. Now, however necessary Sir Joshua might deem it, to impress such a precept upon the minds of the students of the Royal Academy to stimulate their attention and industry, we apprehend he could have very little faith in it himself; and we may with truth assert, that few men ever arrived at the eminence he did without a considerable portion of that genius which he thought it convenient to deny the existence of. The constant theme of his enthusiastic panegyrics was one of the greatest geniuses the world ever beheld; and the unlimited powers of that man's mind which could embrace the perfection of architecture,

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sculpture, and painting, and furnish proofs for the admiration of succeeding ages, that he excelled in all, must not only be possessed of a genius, but of an immortal and heaven-inspired one too. But more than one great man in this age have fallen into weaknesses that hath made us regard the intellect of elderly ladies with greater deference than hitherto we had been accustomed to do. And, indeed, the liberal subscribers to the Venetian secret, is not the only proof we could adduce to establish the truth of this remark. But if three eminent painters have exhibited premature symptoms of dotage, we are bold enough to assert, for the honour of all, that few professions are so far removed from human nature, as not to exhibit in some of their members evident marks of that incurable simplicity which cunning knaves have agreed to nickname folly: and this they call an inexhaustible bank upon which they have all drawn for supplies since the creation.

But to return to our first position, re-

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specting the difference of opinion so prevalent among the respectable professors of picturecraft; and we may here assert, that few subjects have ever been so long the favourite topic amongst those who pass for men of taste, as the fine arts, as they are generally termed. And yet, strange to relate, though not the less true, there are scarcely any two of the many thousands in all countries who assume the name and office of connoisseurs that can agree upon the perfect delineation of the human figure, or what is, or is not the genuine production of any one of the great masters of antiquity, further than the opinion is justified by the veracity of the traditions that have been handed down to us. Hence the wide, and never-to-be-exhausted field which produces so plentiful an harvest to the whole tribe of adventurers, commonly called picture-dealers, among whom we are not about to be so ill-mannered as to exclude even a few of the first ranks in society. For nothing is more notorious than the fact of foreign dukes, native peers, knights, squires, merchants, and bankers driving a most

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profitable trade, sometimes by wholesale, in buying, selling, and exchanging pictures, prints, drawings, and all the extensive et ceteras which constitute what may be justly denominated the whole arcana of virtù. If, therefore, this traffic is viewed with any degree of complaisance throughout the elegant circles, how comes it to pass that the very same barter when in the hands of the profession, that is, when followed by his lordship's valet, or my lord duke's tonsor, should sink into disrepute, or dwindle into a calling so very suspicious to create such extreme vigilance, and stubborn incredulity, as no moral rectitude, nor just asseveration, however solemn, can remove. Again, when the same calling descends, for so we must, for the sake of etiquette, admit it to do, inasmuch as the immediate servants of the great are so often completely masters of all those who aspire to the honour of serving their lords; we say, when this same honourable profession sinks a degree lower, even down to shopkeepers, or as it sometimes hath happened, to decayed artists, brokers, and mechanics;

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then indeed, horse-dealing, which has sometimes been confounded with another phrase much too gross for any application to our present subject, namely, horse stealing, even this halter-gaining business is not more proverbially notorious for every species of trick, than our worthy calling. The causes of these, and many other seeming incongruities, shall be explained by a variety of examples too familiar to engender doubt, and too faithful to dread a challenge, even from a spirit of interested contradiction. But we would here beg leave to premise, for the sake of justice, that in a profession, the very existence of which depends so much upon the whim and caprice of the purchaser, it is not to be wondered at that so many artifices are practised by the dealers in such articles; in fact, the very gullability of the amateurs not only invites, but frequently opens the door, as it were, for the admission of every practitioner who may be disposed to enter, and make trial of his skill in the legerdemain of picturecraft. And here we may observe, as in a thousand other instances of the vanity of us poor bi-

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peds, that the more we are ignorant of the merit of what we profess so much admiration for, the more tenacious are we of our opinion, respecting an object which affords us so much pleasure; so that ignorance and obstinacy are never more firmly allied than when they are opposed by common sense, and ocular demonstration. In order to exemplify the foregoing remarks, we shall furnish our readers with a few anecdotes, the truth of which may be depended upon, having fallen within the course of our own immediate observation. A very few years since, we cannot be particular as to dates for obvious reasons, a *gentleman* in the strictest sense of the word, possessing an independent fortune, which he had acquired in the honourable discharge of his duty, returned to his native land to enjoy the blessings of wealth thus fairly obtained. And being a professed enemy to the fashionable vice of play, found himself completely at leisure to follow any laudable amusement. Happening one day to walk into an auction-room in the vicinity of St. James's, which was uncommonly crowded

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in consequence of the sale of a professed connoisseur's pictures; he purchased a catalogue, and paying rather too much attention to the celebrated commissioned orator of that day, he soon found, or rather believed, that in proportion as he read his catalogue and listened to the elaborate description of each picture that was brought up, his judgment began to expand, and his confidence in the orator dilated in proportion. The consequence was, that he bid eagerly, and the appearance of opposition, for in truth it was merely appearance, from gentlemen to all visible effect, did but increase his avidity, till he purchased all it was intended he, or any other real buyer should be permitted to have at any price short of a thousand per cent. profit to the proprietors of that sale; for, notwithstanding he had spirit enough to bid one hundred pounds more than ever several of those exquisite gems exhibited on that day cost the owners, that with them was too paltry a consideration, a sum too small to clear by a jewel of the first water; and thus their insatiable avarice was his salva-

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tion for that day. Having waited till the conclusion of the sale, and demanded his bill from the clerk, he was rather surprized at the sum total being so swelled, as to amount for seven pictures only, to six hundred and fifty pounds. But as there were several very disinterested gentlemen round him, and some dealers of a similar description, all of whom were so polite as to compliment him upon his taste, a bait which seldom fails, and the cheapness of his purchase; he concluded that his best way was to settle the bill by a draft upon his banker, and leave his address, in order to have his treasure sent home without any further delay. Long, however, before this, his address was known, his name having been memorandumed in half the dealers' catalogues, or pocket-books; for, upon buying the first lot, it was necessary to give his name to the clerk, which he did on a slip of paper, written with a black-lead pencil. And the name was scarcely registered in the alphabetical order of sale, when it was transferred, as we observed before, to the dealers' catalogues, for what purpose shall

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be explained in due time. For the present, be it known, there are many gentlemen dealers, as well as the meaner sort, who attend sales for this specific purpose; namely, to find out who are *real buyers*, particularly the *raw ones*, to adopt a techinal idiom of the profession, and whose property the pictures in general are.

But to return, our amateur, who, in his way home, could not help reflecting that it was very possible his judgment must be subject to the fiery ordeal of some of his friends whom he knew had the reputation of being good judges, and were in reality possessors of some fine pictures; and then the idea first occurred of the possibility of his having paid rather too much for his temerity, when he might have had the benefit of their advice gratis. In short, these cogitations had nearly spoiled a very good appetite; but, taking a turn or two in the green park, and being fortunate enough to meet a few gentlemen of his acquaintance, their conversation, and his own naturally good disposition, soon dis-

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pelled the temporary gloom that had for a few moments clouded the prospects of enjoyment which he had anticipated from the frequent ideal contemplation of his new purchase. And here the goodness of heart displayed by our amateur, was no less conspicuous, than his spirit in bidding so liberally at the auction; for conceiving that even pleasure is not worth enjoying till the participation of our friends has given to it a mental zest; he prevailed upon several of the gentlemen to accompany him home to dinner. The elegance of his manners, and the genial hospitality that always pervaded his whole domestic œconomy, seldom failed of procuring guests of the first respectability and talent: but when he backed the invitation with an earnest of displaying several specimens of his taste for the fine arts, the magic charm attached to that promise became irresistible.

By the time the party arrived at the mansion of their elegant host, the porters were returning, after discharging from their

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brawny shoulders a ponderous load of the inimitable works of those immortal masters whose invaluable productions have filled the universe with their fame. Of these, need we mention the divine Raphael, the sublime and inimitable Michael Angelo Buonarotti, the soft and vivid life-giving Titian, or the languid soul-touching Guido. The satisfaction which beamed in the countenance of our amateur, after his interrogatories respecting the safe delivery of the above-mentioned gems, were answered in the affirmative by the porters, is beyond the descriptive powers of the pen; therefore, with all due deference, we shall leave the enviable task to some able and highly-favoured master of the pencil.

Immediately upon the entrance of his company, our newly-created amateur gave orders to his servants to arrange the seven treasures of the Roman school in the best light in the drawing-room, with orders never to spare the beautiful velvet chairs upon which the pictures were to be placed for the convenience of the visiting connoisseurs,

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maugre all the dust and dirt which the frames had acquired since their journey from the capital of the once great mistress of the world: all which they performed in a trice. The party advanced to the mental treat; and last of all the admiring train was our amateur, expecting to be overwhelmed with a deluge of compliments from his friends, upon his good fortune and taste. Fortunately for him, there was one among the number who happened to be a judicious and rational collector, and to whom all the rest looked up with a degree of veneration, and from whose judgment they had never occasion to appeal. This gentleman, by one significant glance, convinced the rest that there was but one opinion amongst them respecting their friend's purchase, and the necessity there was of reserving that opinion for another opportunity.

But, as there is no state more irksome to an ingenuous mind than suspense, it need not be wondered at that our host betrayed considerable impatience at the protracted

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verdict of so many qualified judges. In short, it required all the good nature and firmness that peculiarly distinguished Sir Disney Doubtful, for so we shall call him, to resist the frequent appeals made to his judgment by our amateur during their repast; and the answers he constantly received, bore so much the features of evasion, that as every succeeding question became more direct, Disney was obliged to promise his opinion after each man had done honour to half a dozen bumper-toasts, all tending to prove their good wishes towards the advancement of the fine arts. The consequent hilarity which a ready acquiescence to this proposal quickly produced, was the happy moment that Sir Disney chose to undeceive his friend; and if possible convince him that such deceptions as had been practised upon him was not so much a reflection upon his judgment, as a compliment to his heart. "I have declined, till this propitious instant," said the facetious knight, "when we all appear not only pleased with each other, but, as I trust, sufficiently reconciled to ourselves.

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I have thus refrained, I say, from giving an opinion, till I thought I had discovered the crisis of our friend's uneasiness, at a period when jocular admonition could be administered *in quantum sufficit*, without any danger of creating a nausea in my patient. As therefore we have all been subject to the same malady, and have each in our turn suffered from that mental contagion amongst amateurs, called the Picture-Mania, and have yet recovered, our experience at least, as well as our cure, must create confidence, and inspire a well-founded hope in our patient, that his case is by no means singular, and still farther from being desperate. But before I proceed any farther, I shall now prescribe another bumper-toast, to the memory of that ingenious artist who first devised the productive scheme of *picturecraft*, taken in the utmost latitude of the phrase." Which being drank with the greatest cheerfulness, our knight proceeded—

"You may have heard, my dear friends, a great deal of priestcraft, lawcraft, as

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also a great variety of handycrafts; nay, you shall have, even witchcraft in addition to all the rest; and yet I will boldly affirm, that a combination of the whole would be very inferior in its operation and influence upon the human mind, compared to the most powerful of all craft—all hail to thee, most potent, and all-subduing picture-craft! To gentlemen of your sense and discernment, a tedious disquisition, or an explication of more than one moment, upon the subject, would be superfluous. It is hardly necessary, therefore, to observe, that to all the other species of craft before mentioned, the weak, the ignorant, the superstitious, and illiterate, have been the dupes, generally speaking; but to the infatuation of picturecraft, none scarcely but men of the most refined understanding, men of the soundest learning, the brightest genius, and the greatest celebrity, have become the voluntary dupes, as it were, of a number of the most contemptibly ignorant professors of the said fascinating picturecraft.

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"To exemplify these assertions, in the present instance, would be unnecessary, as the whole seven of us now assembled are living proofs of the above statement; and, without descending to flattery, I may be permitted to ask from the public no inconsiderable share of credit, on the score of talent, as well as learning, for every individual present. But after all, we have each had the consolation of being agreeably deceived for a time; and while the delusion lasted, I must confess, that I am philosopher enough to acknowledge my pleasure fell considerably short of what I have tasted before experience had taught me the value of that one significant word, which had never been such a constant check and drawback upon all the pleasure I formerly enjoyed, as it is in my purchase of pictures now—need I mention *caution*?

"You must know, my dear friend," continued the knight, addressing himself to our newly commenced amateur, "that there are now, and ever have been, a number of ingenious artists, in various places

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upon the continent, whose sole employment is copying the works of the great masters of antiquity; and, by a singular species of legerdemain, well known to some of their brethren here, contrive to give them that fascinating mellowness which resembles the tint which can only be effectually given by time; and in this species of trick they are too often successful. Such has been the case with me, repeatedly; and I make no doubt but every one of our friends here has experienced in his turn the same deception, and has been as much pleased with it, till some stern obtruding judge has made us *wise*, at the *expence* of our *delight*."

When our knight had thus concluded, the whole party, their entertainer excepted, expressed their assent to all that had been said, and acknowledged the justice of his concluding remark. The green amateur declared, with the utmost appearance of good humour, his determination of remaining a dupe as long as possible, agreeably to the knight's own position, that it

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was more like a real philosopher to retain his happiness, than barter it for such a troublesome ingredient as wisdom; and for this purpose he was determined never more to consult the opinions of any man respecting his collection, who knew more of the merit of a picture than could give him pleasure. How long he continued in this demi-philosophic humour, it shall be our task to inform the reader in the course of the present history.

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CHAP. XII.

ARRIVAL IN ENGLAND OF THE CHINESE ADEPT, DES-CHONG-FONG, AND HIS FRIEND CHEVALIER SIR THEODORE MAGUILPH, WITH THEIR UNRIVALLED COLLECTION OF PICTURES—THEIR INDUSTRY IN DISCOVERING THE RETREAT OF THE CHEF-D'ŒUVRE OF GUIDO.

NOT long after the departure of the young English student for his native land, the noble possessor of the illegitimate offspring of the divine Guido, took an opportunity of gratifying the Chinese connoisseur and his friends with a view of his masterpiece of art; and when their admiration was at the highest, took an opportunity of declaring that this wonderful production was no more than the copy of its divine original, which the un-

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cle of the young artist they saw was in possession of, and who resided in London. Their confusion at this relation could only be equalled by their unparalleled effrontery which succeeded it soon after their recovery. And they declared, that nothing but their respect for so profound a connoisseur could have prevented them from declaring their opinion of its being spurious; though deserving the highest commendation for the faithfulness of its resemblance to the original. "But then," added the chevalier, "your just discrimination could never have overlooked the Flemish gout, evident at the first view of the *tout ensemble;* the eye of the picture is evidently suspicious.—None of the divine expression, none of that downy softness in the cast of the draperies—in short, this group of angels are too gross and fleshy for any but a Flemish master to imagine or embody.—Instead of floating on thin and heavenly æther, you see they are supported by clouds as thick and greasy as pancakes.—Oh, ye divine powers of the immortal Guido! what a treat would the original be to the vision

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of a kindred professor!" The nobleman admitted the justice of the chevalier's remarks, and complimented him upon his extraordinary judgment and taste, while the sage ambassador to the great mogul, nodded assent with all the dignity of a European privy counsellor.

After this curious incident had been noted in the annals of the noble collection, a few more visits put an end to all further communication, the nobleman being ever after impervious to the view of our illustrious friends, who on their part took all possible care to expedite a journey to the land of wealth, where such a plentiful harvest awaited their prosperous arrival. They accordingly landed safe on the envied soil of Albion, and in a short time arrived at the capital of the commercial world. After some trifling refreshment from the fatigues of their journey, they sallied forth in search of the treasure which had for some time engrossed all their thoughts; when enquiring their way in very bad English, they were directed very civilly by two or three

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honest John Bulls whom they stopped for that purpose; but happening to turn down a wrong street, which led them considerably out of their way, they became somewhat irritated at their disappointments, and rather too imperious in their tone of future enquiry. But the indignant spirit of honest John began to display itself, when the travellers began to footer him for their own mistakes; and we are sorry to relate, but for the interference of a gentleman, who by accident was passing during this scene of unintelligible altercation between the strangers and a mob of his countrymen, and who luckily spoke French, our character for hospitality would have suffered at the expence of the eyesight probably of one or both of the connoisseurs. For at the instant he stepped in between the parties, a fist or two were levelled at the optics of our amateurs, which if not prevented would have manually dammed up every organ of vision. But the gentleman explaining to his irascible fellow-citizen the cause of the misunderstanding, they all dispersed, contenting themselves with blasting what they

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were timely prevented from closing. This polite gentleman kindly accompanied them to the house they were in quest of, left them at the door, and wished them a good day, giving them this wholesome advice, never to address an Englishman as if they were giving their orders to a French footman, as the first would serve them for civility only, and the latter might become more servile from the haughtiness of their commands.

Having arrived just as the family of the dealer was sitting down to dinner, the servant who opened the door left them in the shop, to acquaint her master who was above stairs at his repast; who instantly rose, hearing they were foreigners, and invited them to partake of the roast beef of old England; this they politely declined, and begged to amuse themselves with the view of his pictures till he had done. The dealer, whose name was Scumble, no sooner understood that one of the gentlemen was a son of the palette, being a tolerable brush himself, than he led them into his best

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shew-room, and returned to finish his meal. The friends being thus left alone, expressed their surprise at the number of pictures they saw, not only in the shop, but up stairs; and on every landing-place, were piles of them; and as the backs were only visible to the passing observer, their value was open to conjecture. Several hundred, however, were exhibited to the view, which adorned the walls of two very large rooms, most of which were well framed, and many of them certainly merited what was thus expended in their decoration. They, as well as all other foreigners, had conceived a vast idea of the wealth of England, and every thing they saw since their arrival served to confirm them in that opinion. But that an individual, and so inconsiderable a one too, as a plebeian dealer, for he really had no Esq. tacked to his name, should possess as many pictures as some of the princes on the Continent, excited both their envy and their wonder. The return of Mr. Scumble put an end to their reflections for the present, and they complimented him upon the number and merit

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of his pictures, and as they spoke in the French language very fluently, he conceived they were of that nation from the first; but the profusion of their compliments upon this occasion confirmed him completely in that opinion. In order, therefore, to be as little behind him as possible, he took them into what he called his cabinet-room, and showed them two very fine pictures of their celebrated countryman Claude, upon whose fascinating powers he dwelt with apparent delight. He then produced two or three landscapes from the classic pencil of the elegant Poussin; the merit of each having been sufficiently descanted upon, he turned to a very good picture by Sebastian Bourdon, the subject of which was Christ raising of Lazarus; this last, though he was not so eloquent in describing, was certainly the best of his French pictures, and as far as originality is entitled to preference, had more than its share, being the only one of that school that was not a copy, which Mr. Scumble very well knew. And now the gentlemen having seen every gem but

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that which they came purposely to see and purchase, began their manœuvres to obtain it upon as easy terms as possible. Having priced two or three Italian pictures, from which every tint that bore the least resemblance to living nature had long since vanished, they after a long trial of skill concluded a bargain, at about a third of the sum Mr. Scumble first demanded. But for the honour of native genius, he declared upon his soul they must have mistook what he said, for as he told them in English thirty guineas, they certainly confounded the sound and took it for ninety, which he would scorn to ask any gentleman, much less brother artists, and in the dealing way too. This was done and uttered with a grace so peculiar to himself, that it would have deceived any other than the possessor of that matchless jewel, the bottom of Lot's china bowl, which contained in glowing allegory the origin of the mighty Chinese empire.

After this specimen, the parties of course would understand each other better than to

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give any cause for future mistakes; and the chevalier lamenting the scarcity of fine cabinet pictures, requested Mr. Scumble would recommend them to any of his countrymen who had such, and were inclined to part with them at a very good price; "for to be ingenuous," continued he, "we have a commission for collecting such at any reasonable price, for no less a personage than the Great Mogul, who is determined to purchase such a collection as shall vie with the most celebrated in the world." Mr. Scumble lost not a word of what had been said; and having been advertised by his nephew's letter of the circumstance of the nobleman's scheme, and who the parties were that it was to be practised upon, he now recovered from the mistake he had fallen into, in consequence of their speaking French so fluently.

Being thus let into the secret of their mission, he told them in return, that he had indeed but one fine picture of the description they wanted; but that was such a gem, and the circumstances under

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which he could sell it so dangerous, that nothing but a certain conviction of its being sent out of Europe would induce him to part with it at any price they could name. He then entered into the history of this uncommon production, and in the description of its merit nearly equalled the powers of the unrivalled Des-chong-fong. At length he produced this rival of the antique China punch-bowl's bottom, to confirm all the praises he had lavished upon it; but they were dumb, and remained unmoved with its beauties. Mr. Scumble, not a little chagrined at this indifference, expressed his surprise, which indeed was real, as he had not mentioned a word about price in the course of his elaborate harangue upon its merit; declaring he viewed it as the *ne plus ultra* of the art. They then gave him to understand the cause of their silence arose from a wish of not hurting the feelings of a person who had shewn them so much attention and politeness; and therefore they had avoided telling him, that within a fortnight they had seen the original picture at the Marquis D——n's, at the Hague; and,

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that they were sorry for the deception he was under, and hoped it would not be attended with much loss. Scumble, not the least disconcerted at this assertion, although fully sensible of its truth, he knew those who made it were of a very different opinion, and he was resolved to make them pay for what he detested in another, although he was in the constant practice of it himself, and never failed but for want of an opportunity. He therefore told them, that the reverse of their story was really the fact, and his nephew, who had seen and knew as much as any of the profession, would confirm it; and so confident was he of that young man's judgment, that he would back it with a thousand guineas; and offered them the picture they had agreed to give thirty for, upon condition of their finding any person hardy enough to lay him that wager. In fact, after a number of tricks and assertions, *pro* and *con*, had continued to prolong this *farce* for more than three hours, the genius of old England prevailed, and the Chinese adept and his friend purchased our picture, at the moderate price of six hundred guineas, which was just

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one hundred more than Scumble ever asked, even when he really believed it, to be the genuine production of the immortal Guido.

As the satisfaction of the honourable parties in this transaction was mutual, Mr. Scumble begged they would indulge him with their company to supper; and as they were strangers to London, he and his nephew, who had arrived but two days from the Continent, would see them to their inn, which was in Holborn. In the disposition we have described the parties, it is almost unnecessary to inform our readers that very little invitation was necessary to induce a compliance on the part of our foreign adepts; and the accidental arrival of Miss Sophia Ogle determined the point at issue. For upon that young lady's being desired by her uncle Scumble to use her endeavours to prevail with the gentlemen, miss, who spoke French with so much attraction and grace upon the occasion, completely gained her point, and the hitherto invulnerable heart of the proud chevalier yielded to the all-bewitching influence of

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English beauty. And from this auspicious meeting, Miss Sophia numbered the knight of the polar star among the principal of her conquests.

Soon after this important affair was adjusted, the arrival of his nephew was announced; and being introduced to the gentlemen by his uncle, the latter appeared surprised at the parties recognizing each other; and was not backward in auguring that such an agreeable society, drawn together by mere accident as it were, might one day prove the comfort of his declining years, by drawing the bonds of that society into a lasting and happy union. Miss *coloured* exceedingly at this allusion; and though it must be confessed her *practice* in that branch of *female art* was by no means despicable, yet, in the present instance, she was most indebted to nature. The optics of the chevalier were not inattentive to the virgin tints that adorned the soft cheek of Miss Sophia; and as few men understood effect better, we may fairly conclude he was delighted with this instance of it so clearly in his favour. The sage manda-

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rin, though by no means of an age to defy the artillery of love, nor of a constitution much calculated to resist temptation, very candidly resigned all pretensions in favour of his friend. He therefore entered into a long conversation with the brother of the young lady, and contrived to engage the uncle in the party, to give his friend an opportunity of making the most of his time.

Few instances, we believe, are upon record of a more rapid progress being made in the great concern of love, than in this of our chevalier; in fact, the coyness of Miss Sophia was no great obstacle, and the title of her lover sounded so delightfully harmonious in her pretty ears, that her vanity constantly echoed Lady Sophia Maiguilph, as an appropriate response to her wishes. For the Chinese adept never lost an opportunity of addressing the chevalier by his title of knight, ever and anon appealing to his friend Sir Theodore, whenever the conversation would admit.

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Tea and coffee were now brought in, and the young lady did the honours of this domestic business with graceful propriety; nor were the mute, but significant organs of the soul idle during this original eastern repast. In the course of the conversation, in which Mr. Scumble generally took the lead, miss, though not very attentive to it, discovered a very important secret, which was, that the knight was unmarried; and it is impossible to conceive with what additional lustre her fine black eyes shone upon this charming occasion. Indeed her glances were now become irresistible; and the poor knight, at whom they were all levelled, was incapable of any further resistance; so that, in seeking a picture, the poor chevalier had nearly lost himself.

A walk being proposed till supper, miss, by some accident, as they proceeded to St. James's Park, found her arm in contact with the knight's; and so prosperous a beginning could not fail of inspiring her with

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more than common hopes of a happy conclusion. But we must not conceal the fact, that in all this amorous proceeding, vanity was the ruling motive on the young lady's part. Not so with our enamoured chevalier, who, notwithstanding a large portion of pride, was fully resolved to forego that and every other advantage, and sacrifice all his honours at the shrine of beauty.

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CHAP. XIII.

THE HAIR-BREADTH ESCAPE OF THE CHEVALIER FROM THE PONDEROUS SHACKLES OF HYMEN, AND SOME INTERESTING ANECDOTES OF MISS SOPHIA.

IF the young lady lost no opportunity of pursuing the advantage already gained so as to ensure complete victory, the uncle was by no means idle on his, in sounding the friend of our knight respecting the state of his finances, and the extent of his abilities as an artist. Being satisfied in all these particulars, he let drop several broad hints respecting his property, and the certainty of his dear children, as he called his niece and her brother, having it all. To say the truth, the property of Mr. Scumble would have been no very despicable bait in

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the eyes of several princes of the German empire, and therefore highly desirable by one of their poor knights. The party returned from their walk, delighted with the pleasing scene that glided before them; and miss lost no opportunity of pointing out the most conspicuous of the buildings about St. James's and the Green Park, as the Abbey, Buckingham house, the Horse Guards, and others; which last, the two foreigners seemed much pleased with.

During supper the young lady renewed her operations with redoubled perseverance, and her success was as complete as such ardour well merited; the congenial and heart-cheering juice of the grape was no trifling auxiliary upon this important occasion; and after several bumpers to the arts, to painters, and their wives and sweethearts, all of which the chevalier manfully pledged, notwithstanding the frequent caution of his friend, still strength and courage were obliged, after a severe conflict, to yield to the all-subduing powers of the rosy god. Miss was somewhat piqued at this short-

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lived victory obtained over love, and chided her brother and uncle very severely, for urging a gentleman who could not be supposed equal to a contention with those, who were in the daily habit of such a vulgar custom. The uncle not being in a humour to relish any sarcasm upon any of his customs, and that before strangers, ordered his niece to bed, and then broached another bottle. The young lady perceiving her uncle had drank too much to bear contradiction, reluctantly obeyed, after recommending the snoring chevalier to the care of her brother, and his friend the mandarin. Mr. Scumble had now passed the rubican; and whenever that was the case, his will was generally a law to all about him; he therefore rang the bell for his servant, and ordered beds to be got ready for the accommodation of his friends, whom he swore should not depart his house that night.

Mr. Scumble, though in general a very frugal sober man, it was known, upon similar occasions to the present, would relax

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from his temperate habits; and, as such a one as the present amply afforded the means, we must excuse the excesses of such a debauch. For, notwithstanding the allusion of his niece, which certainly had more foundation in spleen than truth, he was seldom or never accused of drinking deeply at his own expence. By the time he had got through the bottle, in accomplishing which neither the stranger nor his nephew gave him much assistance, he was incapable of fulfilling his promise of seeing them all to bed, and very quietly fell back in his great chair, joining in the nasal chorus of the knight, to the complete annoyance of the remaining guests. The next morning our love-sick chevalier was too ill to be removed, not indeed wholly owing to the wounded state of his poor heart, but from the fumes of a much larger quantity of wine than he had ever before consumed at one sitting. However Miss Sophia affected to chide her uncle as the principal cause of the knight's mishap, she could not help smiling when he retorted that in her heart she most devoutly thanked him: and desired

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her to see that he was properly attended to; and after visiting the sick man, he brought the pleasing intelligence to his niece of his being out of danger. The three gentlemen now set out to procure apartments for the strangers, and were fortunate enough to meet with a very commodious set in Leicester Fields, where the baggage of the travellers was soon after deposited; and after taking a round through Piccadilly, St. James's Street, and Pall Mall, returned to breakfast. When they arrived they enquired for the chevalier, and were surprized to hear that he was taken so ill soon after their departure, that miss thought proper to send for a Physician, who had began the regular process of death by bleeding the poor chevalier so copiously, as to preclude the necessity of a second application. In fact, the loss of a few ounces more, and the business of life would have been soon at an end with this great man; and by the ignorance of this practitioner the world would have been thus deprived of the talents of one of the greatest ornaments

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of the double profession of painter and dealer.

This being the situation of affairs, no wonder miss was seriously alarmed at the state of her admirer; and being above all the prudish scruples of those ladies who would sacrifice a fellow-creature rather than a false delicacy, she humanely attended the chevalier, and saw that every thing which was proper for his case should be provided, and for more than a fortnight gave him them with her own fair hand. It was natural from these attentions, and the recruit which the vessels had received from the nutriment thus administered, for the patient to gain strength, which he did, and with it health; and his removal to his own lodgings was to take place the next day, after his loving attendant had pronounced him able to come down stairs. It is natural to conclude that our knight was now more confirmed in his attachment, from the circumstances here stated, than the same space of ordinary courtship could have produced, even without the additional mo-

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tive of gratitude for such apparently disinterested attention. He, therefore, made no secret of his intentions to his friend and having secured the affections of the young lady, there remained nothing further for the completion of his worldly happiness, but the consent of her uncle. This, there was no great difficulty in procuring; and all things being thus happily adjusted, nothing now remained to retard their union, but the restoration of the chevalier's health. In this stage of the business, when matters had been carried so far as to bid defiance to retraction, an awkward circumstance intruded to mar this scheme of well-founded happiness, and which gives us no less pain to relate. On the very night preceding the removal of the knight to his own apartment in Leicester Square, after parting with his intended about eleven, whom he embraced with unusual tenderness, he withdrew to his chamber, and fell into a pleasing sleep, from which he was disturbed by the fatal termination of one of the most happy dreams he had ever been blessed with.

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He imagined in this sleep, that a select party, of the lady and her uncle's relatives and friends, had repaired to his lodgings in their best apparel, and handed from a very handsome coach his intended bride, beautiful as an angel. That after the party had refreshed themselves with what they chose from the side table, they all withdrew, leaving the intended couple alone; and in that delicious interval he had almost devoured her with kisses; when the party returned, and four coaches drew up to the door to take them to church. Having handed his darling into one of the coaches, in which were two young ladies, who were to be bridemaids, they all set off for church; and having been drove at a round pace, they soon arrived at the avenue which led up to the porch, where they saw the parson waited their coming. All the coaches had discharged their fares, and had drove off before the one he was in; and, having handed the young ladies out, they all made what haste they could, and arrived in the church, through the porch, before he or his intended bride

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were within ten yards of that place—when all of a sudden, a large mastiff dog sprung over the fence of the church-yard, foaming at the mouth in the most terrific manner, and after him twenty people, with all manner of weapons for his destruction. Alarmed at that moment for the safety of his dear Sophia, he caught her up in his arms, and flew with her to the church-door, when she gave a violent spring from his arms, into the church, and cruelly shut the door after her in his face; while the dreadful animal, now at his heels, was just opening his destructive jaws to seize this poor deserted victim, when the terror arising from such a situation awoke him, at the very instant he seemed devoted to the most dreadful of all fates.

The impression made upon his mind by this shocking dream prevented him from closing his eyes again; and it was now past four o'clock in the morning of a fine day in autumn. As he lay revolving the particulars of this strange dream in his mind, and exerting every faculty of his

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reason to banish the effects of it from his tortured imagination, his attention was called off from this disagreeable reverie, by a noise of some person's feet in the landing-place, just by his door. Presently afterwards, he thought he heard the shop-door open, and shut gently to, when, slipping to the window, and pulling aside the curtain, he saw a young man, wrapped up in a great coat, dart directly across the street. He then crept to the door, and, putting his ear to the key-hole, heard footsteps ascending the stairs, and could trace the sound distinctly enough over his head in the room, where he knew his mistress slept; and there the noise ceased. Comparing this strange occurrence with all the incidents of his dream, his suspicions became stronger, the more he weighed and considered them; and he blessed his propitious stars that had thus warned him from such impending danger as that of being cornuted.

When they were all met at breakfast, he endeavoured to conceal the dire ef-

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fects of such imaginary causes; but the impression was too deeply engraved upon his mind, and the visible uneasiness under which he seemed to labour, was obvious to the most superficial observer. To all their enquiries, however, he had a very plausible excuse, and that was, the effects of his late illness. Nothing could exceed the anxiety of his mistress upon this occasion; every word was accompanied with a look so tender, and each sigh seemed to whisper her fears of his relapsing, when she would behold him on the bed of sickness, instead of springing with joy to meet her on the bridal-couch. Her behaviour on this occasion made him wish to doubt the evidence of his eye-sight, and he repented sincerely for having given way to the curiosity which drove him to the window, where he encountered such disagreeable evidence. Such is the power of beauty over the resolution of the boasting lords of the creation. With some difficulty, therefore, he mustered resolution enough to decline their invitation to dinner that day, under pretence of arranging some

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business at his lodgings with his friend, but was obliged to promise them his company to tea.

On their way to Leicester Fields, to the lodgings, Des-chong-fong remarked the sudden change in his friend; and believing it to proceed more from mental disquietude than from any infirmity of the body, questioned him concerning the alteration. The knight, happy in an opportunity of unbosoming himself, related, when they got to their lodgings, all the circumstances of his dream, and concluded with what he had seen and heard, which his friend thought the only part of the relation worth attending to, and promised his advice and assistance in this intricate and delicate business. To remove the gloom which clouded the chevalier's mind, his friend proposed dining at some restaurateur in the neighbourhood, where a temperate glass of wine, and cheerful company would dispel every melancholy idea, and at all events qualify him to act the hypocrite as well as his mistress, until an oppor-

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tunity offered of detecting her falsehood. The chevalier thanked his friend for his kind advice, and promised to be guided by him in every thing relative to this affair; and, in order to divert themselves till dinner, they took a walk through Hyde Park, where several plans were suggested for the discovery of Miss Sophia's paramour.

The hour of dinner being come, they repaired to a restaurateur in Gerrard Street, where they were regaling themselves with the choicest viands, *a la mode François*, when a personage made his appearance whose face was familiar to the chevalier, and as he passed their box, made a slight inclination of his head. The two friends immediately recollected him, and he proved to be the well-known Mynheer Timmermanspinck, a dealer of characteristic notoriety, who had been in England some years, and might justly vie with the greatest epicures of its capital; and for the destructive powers of a keen appetite exceeded them all. In truth, he seemed to consider existence

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as of no other use than the gratification of that appetite, and might be fairly said to live merely for the sole pleasure of eating and drinking.

When our friends had finished their meal, the chevalier went to the box where the dealer seated himself, and, addressing him in the Dutch and German languages, was surprised at receiving no answer; and, being about to renew his questions, one of the waiters told him in French, that the count never answered any question during his repast, and that when he had satisfied his appetite, he would let him know the gentleman's pleasure, which could not be sooner than an hour, as he had not yet got farther than three covers, out of nine, his usual quantity. The chevalier then casting his eyes upon the count, saw, by his voracious performance, that the waiter's tale of the nine covers was more than probable. Returning to his friend, he related what he saw and heard; and as they had seen him frequently at a merchant's count-

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ing-house in Amsterdam, some years back, wondered how his salary could be adequate to the maintenance of such an appetite. However, as the information he could afford them respecting the place of their abode would be of essential use, as well as amusement, they agreed to fill his belly, that they might have an opportunity of emptying his head; but in this nature was beforehand with them, having sent it into the world a perfect vacuum.

After remaining some time beyond the waiter's calculation, they were informed by another of the servants, that the count would be glad of their company, in his box, as he never stirred for any one; and they went accordingly. After a general recognition had taken place, which in some of its circumstances was extremely mortifying to the count's pride and present situation, they became more sociable; and the titles of Sir Theodore, your Excellency, and Count, that issued from the box, seemed not to affect any of the company in this

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large assembly, but two honest John Bulls, who had dropped in by accident.

After two or three bottles, the count became more communicative, and, in the course of his remarks upon the picture-dealers, inveighed with great bitterness against the ignorance and presumption of his brethren in England, and particularly against Mr. Scumble, whom he treated as an upstart, that was yesterday, as it were, a common house and sign painter, that scraped together money nobody knew how. This was the very string they wished him to touch; and, in a short time, he rated the nephew as a mere daubing pretender, and his sister no better than a common ———. Here he related several of her amours with the young artists her uncle employed to copy and repair at his house, and declared he knew one of them that slept in the house two or three nights in the week, at this time unknown to the uncle; and that she was never known to be constant more than a few months to any one but a young Irish student in the Temple, at whose chambers

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she was as regular an attendant as his bed-maker.

The chevalier was very much agitated during this relation; and as he hinted his doubts about the truth of this narration, the count offered to support the veracity of his assertions with the wager of a dozen of claret; and concluded by detailing the history of his own experience of the young lady's inconstancy.

Furnished with this information, they took leave of the count, whom they invited to breakfast at their apartments; but were given to understand, that he never breakfasted out of his bedchamber; and he gave them his address, in the same square, where he lived for some time in a very gay style, and kept two servants in livery, all which he was enabled to do by a very shallow knowledge in picturecraft, which he has been often heard to swear, since his descent from grandeur, depended *entirely* upon *impudence* and *good luck*.

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The friends now took their leave, in order to keep their appointment with Mr. Scumble's virtuous niece. When their arrival was made known, the young lady flew to meet them, and expressed great satisfaction on hearing her dear Sir Theodore was better; and told them of her uncle being gone to Leicester Square, at her entreaty, to enquire after them, in consequence of their staying half an hour longer than their time. They now went up stairs together, where miss, as usual, presided, but with increased vivacity, her flow of spirits being fondly ascribed to her dear's recovery.

The knight endeavoured to imitate her as close as possible, and was more than commonly gallant; and between tea and supper entertained his deary with a number of anecdotes of the ladies in his country, some of whom he described as having seven or eight lovers at a time, and were never more happy than when, by their coquetry, they were able to set them all by the ears. His excellency the mandarin Des-chong-

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fong, also forgot his usual gravity, and condescended to enliven the company with the many adventures he had met in his travels over the world, particularly in Germany. And then related one which had liked to have been attended with very serious consequences. This was enough to awaken the curiosity of the young lady; and her uncle, who had just returned, joined in requesting his excellency would oblige them with the relation, which he graciously promised as soon as supper was over.

All impatient for the ambassador's story, supper was no sooner over, and the cloth removed, than the young lady reminded his excellency of his promise, when he commenced a long story of a tailor's daughter and her numerous sweethearts in Saxony, the heads of which were, that the said tailor's only child was very pretty, and her father being a man of considerable substance, many good matches had offered, and had been refused in consequence of the vanity of the young lady, whose imagination constantly ran upon a young no-

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bleman, in the neighbourhood, who once condescended to dance with her in disguise. This cause of the young lady's treating her lovers with such haughtiness, set them upon a scheme to revenge themselves for her pride and indifference. For this purpose, they dressed up and instructed a young fellow, of good figure and consummate assurance, to personate one of the elector's nephews, and he, agreeably to their instructions, threw himself in the way of the tailor's daughter, whose ears were ever open to the flattery of every young fellow. After several interviews, they contrived to have a letter delivered to the young man, while upon a visit to her father's house, by a servant in the elector's livery, which he, as he said, pretended to be much affected with; and going out of the door, the young lady followed, being very anxious about her new lover, whom it had been hinted to her was certainly a near relation of the elector; and this letter confirmed the hints, which was from his uncle, commanding his immediate recal upon pain of banishment; and this was the cause of the agitation she saw him

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in. After several interviews, the silly creature consented to elope with the pretended prince, who was no other than a merchant's clerk, in a counting-house in Amsterdam, and in the thirteenth mile of their journey they were overtaken by three of her humble sweethearts, armed, who according to their plan, had been waiting at an inn on the road, as soon as they had notice of the elopement being agreed upon. Her gallant was obliged to submit, and they were brought back to her father's house, and then the whole affair was discovered, and the pretended prince joined in the laugh against this vain young woman, who was mad with rage at such a trick being played her. Here, if the frolic had ended, all would have been well; but the silly fellow who personated the prince was vain enough, amongst his companions, of boasting of the favours he had never received of the tailor's daughter, which one of them resented. This was another sweetheart, not concerned in the plot, and a person that had a real affection for her; and hearing a positive assertion so much to the young lady's dis-

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honour, instantly challenged the calumniator, and he not coming to the place of appointment, was posted as a coward among his companions. But this was not all, the other sweethearts thought their honour concerned in the defence of their mistress; and as the fellow had refused to fight, they hit upon a dreadful scheme of revenge; for laying wait one night, they caught and bound him, and compelled a surgeon whom they brought to perform an operation upon the poor devil, which had nearly cost him his life, as well as manhood. Thus served, he was obliged to fly his country when he recovered, to prevent the derision of the girl, and the contempt of all his companions. "Indeed," continued he, "it is said he repaired to England, where he turned picture-dealer, and goes by the title of Count Timmermanspinck, whereas his origin is exactly as I have related. Thus we see," added the embassador, "the excessive punishment inflicted upon a poor silly devil, through the unpardonable folly of a plebeian coquet; but in fact, she has been justly

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punished, for she is now in her fortieth year, and still remains unmarried; as every person concluded there was ground for strong suspicion, where the lovers of the tailor's daughter could be impelled to such an act of revenge."

The chevalier, who attentively watched the countenance of his mistress during this fictitious relation, was sufficiently convinced by the effect it had, in spite of all her endeavours to conceal it, that the application was not in vain. And at the count's name she could not help exclaiming, "Lord, uncle, it cannot be my old sweetheart, no —that is impossible." The answer of Mr. Scumble did not tend to remove the effect of Miss Sophia's observation, for he damned him for a slanderous blackguard, and wished it had been him with all his heart. After many attempts to recover her sprightliness, miss begged pardon of the company, and withdrew to her chamber, pleading sudden indisposition. The friends returned to their apartments in Leicester Square, both fully convinced of the justice of their suspicions,

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and the chevalier completely cured of his passion, which cure was further confirmed by the knowledge they acquired of her character in the neighbourhood; and the increasing protuberance of her once elegant shape afforded such daily proof as removed all doubt upon the subject.

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CHAP. XIV.

THE CONSEQUENCE OF THE KNIGHT'S DECLINING THE HONOUR OF MISS SOPHIA'S HAND, AND THE PRUDENT CONDUCT OF HER BROTHER UPON THIS OCCASION —ENVY OF MR. SCUMBLE UPON BEING INFORMED OF THE NEW GALLERY ABOUT TO BE OPENED BY HIS FOREIGN BRETHREN, SIR THEODORE AND HIS FRIEND.

THE knight without any reason assigned, having declined all future visits to the house of Mr. Scumble, who, instead of applaudding in secret the delicate conduct of the gentleman upon this occasion, viewed him with the most decided animosity. Being thus freed from the fears and jealousy of love and matrimony, he began to apply himself to the labour of his profession with renovated activity. In this laudable spirit

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he was ably seconded by the experience and industry of his friend, and in a short time they were enabled to announce their plan to the public, by advertising in most of the newspapers. This scheme was to invite those who possessed pictures of a certain class to bring them forward to one or both of these illustrious characters, who were empowered to purchase to the amount of half a million sterling, in order to furnish *a select collection* for his *august highness the Great Mogul.* And as a particular favour conferred upon the public, when a sufficient number of these judiciously chosen gems were arranged, all persons of taste should be admitted to the exhibition of these wonderful efforts of art, at the *small expence of five shillings each.*

In consequence of this notice, a vast number of persons flocked to the house of these profound connoisseurs; and they became in a short time so full of pictures, that another extensive dwelling was obliged to be provided for the overflow. Every day their knowledge, taste, science, and above all,

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their ample means of purchase, were blazened forth from one end of the craft to the other. This, as was perfectly natural, excited the envy of those established dealers, who viewed every attempt to share with them in the profitable traffic of public deception, as a direct attack upon their native and original privileges. But none of them carried this notion so high as Mr. Scumble; for being actuated by family pique, and the envy which rivalship in trade so commonly engenders, but more particularly so amongst the professors of picturecraft; it being full as difficult for any one of them to speak well of another, as to utter one sentence of truth while driving a bargain; we say Mr. Scumble carried his envy to the most extravagant lengths, urged thereto from wounded family pride, and therefore his animosity bore all the features of the most deadly hate. Hence their opposition at sales frequently broke out in the most violent and laughable contention, to the no small gratification of the company at Christie's and Greenwood's, and the general

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emolument of the proprietors and auctioneers.

In consequence of this laudable spirit in the native dealers, uncommon pains were taken to depreciate the collection thus forming by two such adventurers, as our partners were sneeringly called; and they frequently asserted, that no picture in their possession was worth more than fifty pounds. But, notwithstanding all these, and many other artifices, the liberal English public, from an exalted sentiment almost peculiar to their independent nation, and which is to be met with in the lowest of the people that crowd their streets every day—namely, "That whoever quarrels, it is *their* glory to see fair play:" from this noble principle, these foreign interlopers were enabled for a time to make the most formidable stand; and after many years' industry in the business of collecting, and other laudable arts of their calling for the Great Mogul, were enabled, at his desire, to dispose of his collection by auction, at more than three hundred per

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cent. profit; and many of the gems then disposed of, like a great many ladies elegantly dressed, were very unworthy of their expensive clothing; for to speak the truth, several of them were a disgrace to the excellent frames that enclosed such rubbish.

Notwithstanding the animosity of Mr. Scumble and his friends to the newly arrived Collectors, we are happy to relate the prudent, and truly laudable conduct of his nephew, the young English artist, in whose praise we have before had occasion to speak: this young gentleman, although brother of Miss Sophia, Sir Theodore's intended, far from resenting the conduct of the knight upon so trying an occasion, visited him as usual; and endeavoured to soften, by every means in his power, the acrimony of his uncle's unreasonable plan of resentment, by candidly throwing the blame where blame only could fairly attach. He had discernment enough to discover in the productions of the chevalier all that was worthy of imitation, and prudently availed

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himself of the several opportunities this mode of conducting his intimacy gave him, of profiting by the knight's advice and instruction in the art of painting. The pleasure our knight found in the conversation of his *elève* was sufficient compensation for all the instructions he from time to time gave him; and whenever he relaxed from the arduous study of his profession, to indulge at play, or the opera, the young man was his constant companion; and it must be confessed, that the distinguished rank our English artist now holds among his brethren, is in a great measure owing to the valuable lessons taught him by the chevalier, during the course of a long acquaintance.

The idea of dignity which is always supposed to be conferred upon persons filling a diplomatic character by those who have been graciously pleased to appoint them, was never more proudly defended, nor more strenuously supported, than by his excellency the Ambassador of the Great Mogul. And although he was in possession of

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no more credentials to our court in that capacity, than the pope's laundress, yet he never relinquished his claim to respect for an assumed title, the validity of which extended no farther than his own assertion, backed by the mere voice of nominal courtesy. It was this idea of his own dignified rank which made his excellency submit to be the dupe of every adventurer who had address enough to discover his weak side, and pour out the daily incense of adulation to this childish vanity. This august personage, in consequence of the projected scheme of adventure, made public by advertisement, had the honour of frequent visits from the noblest amateurs of Britain, as well as the most distinguished connoisseurs, during the infancy of that scheme, many of whom deserted him long before it was brought to maturity. Whether this desertion arose from a contempt of the consequential airs the great man too frequently assumed, or for the meanness of some of the picture materials with which the Great Mogul's collection was to be formed, we could not with any degree of precision ascertain.

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But the philosophy of such a profound investigator of human actions as Des-chong-fong, was not to be disturbed by the caprice of a few individuals, however dignified their situation in rank might be, if the liberality of their purses did not enjoin adequate respect.

Amongst the number of calumnies industriously propagated by the enemies of this illustrious professor, and his ingenious partner the chevalier, was one that struck directly at the reputation they had taken so much pains to acquire in this country; namely, the infallibility of their judgment in all matters relative to the arts. The story of the trick put upon them by Mr. Scumble, in the sale of the wonderful picture, from that by the magic pencil of Guido, was selected amongst others, as a damning proof of their ignorance and presumption; and was circulated with all the zeal and address peculiar to the professors of picturecraft. This being too home a thrust to be parried by any but the most adroit masters in the science of defence; two or three legal prac-

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titioners were consulted upon the occasion, and these gentlemen made it appear completely to the satisfaction of their clients, that the scandal complained of was to all intents and purposes a base, malicious, and premeditated libel; and that a swinging action would lie against the party or parties, directly or indirectly concerned in aiding and abetting the circulation of such libel, or libellous reports. But the parties themselves demurring in this case, who had thus applied for advice, rather surprized the gentlemen who thus directed them in the only way they could seek redress; and upon expressing their wonder at this seeming inconsistency, were informed that their backwardness arose from a suspicion that their enemies would attempt to prove the truth of their scandal, and therefore turn the tables upon them. For they had heard strange stories of what staunch witnesses can do upon their oaths in our courts. But these truly ridiculous apprehensions were received by the gentlemen of the law with a loud laugh; and after they had shook their sides heartily at the simplicity of such an objec-

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tion, told their clients, that was the only circumstance that would insure them complete success, and wished with all their hearts their opponents would set up such a plea. But finding this merry declaration could not remove their doubts, they were obliged to explain the doctrine of libels as held valid by the best crown lawyers that ever adorned the bar, and sanctioned by the opinion and constant decision of the great Lord Mansfield.—" That the truth of any story aggravated the heinousness of the offence"—or in plainer phrase, " The greater the truth, the greater the libel." After a number of examples quoted to prove the certainty of the law in this case, and many logical deductions, equally demonstrative of the same being founded upon right reason, which is the basis of all law, they succeeded only in satisfying their patient hearers of the truth of one position, which seemed most materially to concern them, and that was, the certainty of their gaining the cause, if their adversary was so ill-advised as to start with truth on his side, if that was his only plea. Overjoyed at this

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assurance, our worthy collectors shook their advisers by the hand, declaring jointly, and severally, never to utter scandal against their brethren of the craft, during their abode in this country, in which there was one word of truth.

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CHAP. XV.

WHEREIN IS A FAITHFUL RELATION OF THE SAD DISAPPOINTMENT THE ILLUSTRIOUS FOREIGNERS EXPERIENCED, IN THE PROMISED SATISFACTION THEY WERE TO HAVE RECEIVED FROM THE JURISPRUDENCE OF THE COUNTRY, BY THE SINGULAR CONDUCT OF THE ATTORNIES EMPLOYED IN THE CAUSE.

SOON after the conference with the gentlemen of the law was over, our injured partners were highly delighted with the assurances they had received of legal redress; immediately flew to communicate the intelligence to a few select friends, amongst whom were three or four intelligent foreigners, who had been long enough in England to learn something of the glorious uncertainty of the law. By these, but more

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particularly their British friends, they were cautioned against being too much elated with the prospect of success, held out to them by those who existed by urging ignorant persons to litigate paltry disputes, which often terminated in the utter ruin of one or both of the contending parties. But above all things, they recommended the strictest attention to the character of the attorney employed in the business, and desired to know the name. When they were told that the affair was entrusted to Messrs. Moorsafe and Label, they allowed that some hope of success might reasonably be entertained, and declared they had no doubt but these gentlemen would endeavour to settle the matter by arbitration.

The report of an action being commenced against Messrs. Scumble and others for a libel, flew with the rapidity of a report from a musket, and these gentlemen seemed to regard one, about as much as they did the other, observing with a sneer, that as both were preceded by a flash, they would most likely end in smoke. But when they re-

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ceived formal notice in a legal way, and saw the respectable names of the solicitors who had undertaken the prosecution, they became convinced that something more than noise and smoke was intended; and having once before very narrowly escaped burning their fingers, fire to the burned child was scarcely more dreadful, and they accordingly set about the means of smothering it. They accordingly repaired to the chambers of a very eminent solicitor, who as usual enquired the name of the gentleman employed, which they shewed him signed to the proceedings, and thereupon his advice was, to compromise the matter by all means; and called their recollection to the issue of a late trial, where one half of the most eminent artists in the kingdom were in direct opposition to the other; and the court were unable to decide upon the only evidence competent to throw a light upon such a question. The consequence was a nonsuit, and the legal fact remains undetermined to this day, of whether the picture was, or was not an original. He moreover reminded them,

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that if they were enabled to prove the picture in question a copy, it would only prove an error in the judgment of the purchaser, which implies no moral turpitude, and consequently could never justify their libelling him or them for so doing. Whereas in the case of such a proof, their action would clearly lie for the recovery of whatever sum they had paid for it; for at all events the transaction could never appear to the court as a *bona fide* one, on the part of Mr. Scumble; who in the scandal published against the purchasers, positively asserts that the picture thus sold by himself is a copy; and that, notwithstanding his taking an original price, and avowing it to be the production of a certain master at the time of sale, he knew then it was not. "Thus then," said this respectable practitioner, "view the case in whatever light you can, it is clearly my opinion, you not an inch of ground to stand upon."

The experienced Mr. Scumble could not but assent to all the gentleman said, and as he had lugged the others into the scrape,

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he was bound to extricate them, and that from more than sheer honourable reasons; so that Mr. Scumble and his associates lost no time in soliciting the friends on both sides to endeavour, by some means or other, to accommodate the matter. In the mean time, Mr. Scumble's solicitor waited upon the plaintiff's attorney; and being well known to each other, the latter readily agreed, with the consent of his client, to stay proceedings, till they endeavoured to compromise the matter, for the credit of all parties concerned, but more particularly for the honour of the profession of picture-craft; which they allowed very candidly ought to take precedence of their own, in point of ingenious mystery. For though it might sometimes happen that they really differed in opinion upon some point of law, at the expence of their clients, yet it had scarcely ever been known for them to differ, merely for the purpose of putting it to the issue of which was most capable of robbing the other; so that the conqueror might thereby have an opportunity of publishing

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his triumphant villainy to the world, in a libel upon the ignorance of a brother he thus over-reached and plundered.

In consequence of this pacific determination between the gentlemen of the profession, so contrary to the general interest, as tending to introduce a precedent inimical to practice, the partners collecting for the Great Mogul were waited upon with terms of reconciliation. But as these terms were short of any thing like public concession, the foreign gentlemen positively refused to accede to any thing short of a public retraction of the scandal, and at the same time disclaimed every idea of pecuniary satisfaction.

After several ineffectual efforts had been thus made, a proposal came from Mr. Scumble and his friends, to messieurs, the Mogul's agents and their's, that they would condescend to meet them at the Feathers, or Standard tavern, Leicester Fields, a house then frequented by a number of mi-

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nor and other artists, there to consider of some effectual mode of satisfying these gentlemen, in every reasonable submission. This invitation, with the concurrence of the agents' attorney, was accepted; and the parties met at the hour appointed, which was four o'clock, and were introduced to a very elegant dinner, provided at the expence of Mr. Scumble. After dinner, several conciliating toasts were drank, and the wine being excellent, quickly softened down all the remaining asperity of the rival dealers, into a tone very much tending to harmonize the principal figures in the social group.

This propitious moment was chosen by the gentlemen employed in the attack and defence of the litigious rivals; and an offer was made, on the part of Mr. Scumble the defendant, to ask pardon before the present company, consisting of painters, dealers, amateurs, speculators, and connoisseurs, amounting to thirty at least, that terms of retraction should be dictated by the oppo-

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site party; and that all expences hitherto incurred, together with dinner and wine, should be discharged by Mr. Scumble and his friends; and, finally, that all animosity should be buried in total oblivion, the parties mutually forgetting and forgiving each other, and in future to live as brethren, having but *one hope*, namely, that of extending the *mania for old pictures* to the remotest part of the *monied world*.

The enthusiasm which the conclusion of these proposals occasioned in the whole circle, was similar to an electric sensation; all felt it alike, at the same instant, and testified their approbation in the most sonorous peal of heartfelt and satisfactory plaudits. The apology was soon dictated by the plaintiff's solicitor, and handed to the aggrieved party, who erased several words, which, in the present amiable temper of their minds, they adjudged too humiliating; which circumstance being announced to the company, occasioned another loud burst of applause. And Mr.

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Scumble read aloud the apology thus altered by his rivals, which he immediately subscribed, and received his full portion of the company's approbation.

All dissensions being thus happily quelled, every individual, save two or three cynical members of the craft, notorious for their rancorous envy, and vulgar national prejudice—with these exceptions, every other member of the company seemed to vie with the rest in promoting the good humour and conviviality of the scene. Bacchus not having yet usurped the reign of Apollo, several good songs were given with effect, by some of the gentlemen-speculators, who were amateurs in vocal melody; and would certainly have had some pretensions to science, but for preferring the simple strains of the heart-melting *Jordan*, to the astonishing artificial perfection of *Mara*'s Italian bravuras.

After the influence of this harmony had continued more than two hours, the de-

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mon of discord began to obtrude his grating sounds; and, like the hideous drone of a Caledonian bagpipe's harsh grunt in the midst of a fine concert, murdered at once every "concord of sweet sound," and put to immediate flight the genius of mirth and song.

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CHAP. XVI.

THE SCENE CHANGES FROM HARMONY TO RIOT AND CONFUSION, WHICH TERMINATES IN A BLOODY FRAY.

ACCORDING to the powers vested in the chairman, in calling for song, toast, or sentiment, in proper order, Sir Theodore was in turn requested to favour the company with a specimen of his vocal powers; which, after declaring his readiness to oblige, provided the company would accept of a song in any other language than English, which he had not yet been able to enrich his budget with, on account of the difficulty he had yet to surmount, before he was perfect enough to attempt a song in our tongue. This apology was admitted; and the chairman told him to make his

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own election, and that as music was an universal language, the company would at least be able to understand the tune, and be gratified, he had no doubt, with any song he chose to oblige them with. Before, however, he could begin, one of the three cynics already described, adopting a vulgar error of his better-natured countrymen, that every man speaking in another tongue than their own, must be a Frenchman, roared out—"Damme, give us any song but a French song—Turkish, Russian, Arabian, or even Irish—any thing, I say, but a damn'd French song."

Mr. Cankergrin was hereupon called to order by the chairman, and the whole company, except the party insulted; but as obedience to that, or any other order, except joining *the pack* in full cry against any *fox* they wished to run down, was no part of Mr. Cankergrin's creed, he stood unabashed as unsubdued; his two worthy associates, vociferating their concurrence in this disturbance, asserting their determi-

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nation of supporting their own countryman, against any b———d French count, or swindling chevalier in the world. The spirit of loud contentious oratory having thus gone forth, and every one rising to speak *to order*, produced such a scene of *disorder and riot*, as hath seldom been witnessed in the purlieus of St. Giles's.

During this confusion, several of the most respectable and liberal of the company withdrew from a scene of riot and ill-manners they could neither subdue nor correct, leaving our two foreign dealers to the care of about five or six of their English friends, most of whom, as well as the noble partners, were completely under the dominion of the jolly god. At this period, Mr. Cankergrin was pouring forth the most bitter invectives against all foreigners, and the most pointed abuse against the only two now left in the room; and in the ebullition of his virulence, happening to couple a detestable epithet with the word foreigner, as personally directed to Sir Theodore, the lat-

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ter flung a glass, wine and all, at his head. But although the intention of the knight, as well as the aim, was directed to the head of the aggressor Cankergrin, an attempt made by his partner to catch the violent hand of the thrower, turned the direction of the glass, which, in consequence of this ill-timed obstruction, came in contact with the head of Mr. Scumble, who was at that moment expostulating with his acquaintance Cankergrin, on the disgrace he was continually heaping upon the profession, by his unqualified abuse of foreigners. This unlucky accident, which caused a contusion in the solid pate of Mr. Scumble, at such an unlucky crisis, opened the old sore so recently healed, and laid the foundation of another, which time itself has not yet been effectual in curing.

The rage of Mr. Scumble's friends was, if any thing, more excessive than his own, for this unprovoked attack upon him; and they did not fail to ascribe it to that revengeful and malicious spirit which pre-

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judice hath ascribed to foreigners in general. The chevalier in vain attempted to justify himself, in broken English; his friend was equally defective in the language as himself; and the native friends, who were there to protect them, were too far-gone to articulate a syllable in their defence. They one and all, of Scumble's side, declared the justice of Cankergrin's invectives; and for the *first time* in his life he was declared, by a majority of his *brethren*, to be *in the right*.

The consequence was, that he made a motion to kick the knight and his partner out of doors, and was seconded by all his party, who agreed *nem. con.* which motion neither of the delinquents understood, till their opponents proceeded to put the sentence in execution. This was began by the mover of the motion, who, advancing with a menacing cerberian brow, attempted to lay hold of the knight by the collar, who, perceiving his intention, and resolving not to be disappointed of his mark this

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time, and clenching his fist, he darted with a sudden spring, with both hands and head, upon his antagonist. Each fist, however, meeting with the opposition of a strong cheek-bone, did but little execution; but the knight's head encountered the stomach of the cynic with so much force as brought him to the ground without motion, save that of its contents, which being an unusual quantity, pent up in so narrow a compass, was thus freed from its confinement, and flew all over the chevalier's laced chadren. But he, contrary to the law of arms, followed up his advantage by inflicting two or three severe kicks upon the ribs of his prostrate enemy. He was proceeding in this manner with great activity, when an English fist, something softer than a sledge-hammer, laid him at full length, so completely stunned as to put an end to his operations upon the fallen Cankergrin. His friends, who were incapable of defending his cause by their oratorical powers, from a cause before hinted, but which could not destroy their manual ex-

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ertions, proved, upon this occasion, that there are more ways than one of serving a friend; and that, when *in extremity*, an English friend may always be *depended upon*. It was just at the critical moment when the chevalier received the forcible salute that humbled him so low, and Mr. Scumble, proud of the opportunity, was proceeding to exercise himself upon the ribs of the fallen knight, who had himself set so bad an example, when he was prevented by a violent blow in the stomach, the effect of which had very nearly spoiled his appetite for ever.

And now the battle raged with more than usual fury; for Briton met opposed to Briton, in the sanguinary fray; and while *victory* remained in awful doubt, in equal poise, struggling between the sides, an adverse event occurred in the battle, which inclined her sanction to the most powerful chiefs, who, perceiving this favourable sign, snatched by one bold effort the laurel which was about to adorn the brows of their antagonists.

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Our grave, and hitherto prudential ambassador, Des-chong-fong, having in vain attempted to suppress the martial ardour which at several periods of the fray inspired him, at length, perceiving all the parties engaged, and his friend about to return to the charge, could no longer resist the impulse which example is so apt to give; and perceiving his friend's party but merely able to prolong the contest, without any hope of being equal to bring it to a speedy issue by their prowess, determined at once to bring it to a conclusion. With this mighty spirit of victory swayed, and being a powerful man, though in years, he seized the back of a large old-fashioned oak-chair, and wrenching it from the seat and rails, began to lay about him with Herculean muscles; which sort of warfare had such an instantaneous effect upon the heads and bones of the adverse party, that, after many vain complaints uttered against the interference of such an auxiliary, they roared out aloud for quarter. But their demands, nor entreaties, availed them nothing, being both made in an un-

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known tongue to their dreadful assailant, who, Achilles-like, when he glutted his revenge by dragging the lifeless trunk of the brave Trojan hero, his antagonist, never would have desisted till he had sated his revenge in a manner not more consistent with the laws of war and generous courage.

This second Ajax was arrested in his dreadful career of havoc, by the interposition of the watchmen, who were called in by the landlord, as soon as the horrid cry of murder was heard, and, together with the waiters, and others out of curiosity from the street, approached the scene of action. No sooner were they entered, than the gallant chief, equally regardless of their numbers as their threats, attacked them with the utmost bravery; and nothing but the immense odds, to which even Charles, the Swedish hero, himself, might have yielded, without any diminution of his fame, could have stayed his conquering arm.

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The severe blows inflicted upon our chief, from so many staffs, at last brought him to the ground, but so bruised and nearly maimed in his arms, as reflected no great credit upon those who claimed a degrading victory, thus "by superior numbers won."

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CHAP. XVII.

PREPARATIONS FOR RENEWING LEGAL HOSTILITIES—DETERMINATION OF THE PARTNERS TO PROSECUTE WITH THE UTMOST RIGOUR—THEIR DISAPPOINTMENT ARISING FROM WANT OF THEIR CHIEF EVIDENCE THOUGH A DUMB ONE—LOSS OF THEIR CELEBRATED PICTURE.

IN consequence of the state of intoxication which every individual appeared to have shared in, who was brought before the constable of the night, he very prudently declined entering any charge, which all the parties appeared extremely willing, but were incapable of exhibiting in any coherent shape; he therefore procured for as many of them as were too insensible to be removed, the best accommodations the watch-house could afford, and sent the

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rest home in coaches. Next morning, instead of appearing before a justice, all except Scumble and Cankergrin, were ashamed of what had happened, and very justly attributed all the mischief that had ensued to the propensities of the latter. As to our chevalier, and his heroic friend, they were willing to shake hands with all parties, and endeavour to forget their bruises and the cause of them as soon as possible. Scumble, however, was not in his present state of irritation to be brought to any terms, and thus all the old feuds were likely to be renewed again with more acrimony than ever. As for Cankergrin, nothing but *a cheap lot of old rubbed-out pictures of the genuine sooty hue* could possibly divert him from a litigious pursuit, even where the chances were three to one against his succeeding.

He accordingly proceeded to indict the two partners for assault and battery, and they lost no time in preparing for their defence. Contented with the assurances of Mr. Mooresafe the worthy lawyer, respect-

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ing the worst consequences that could possibly attend the issue, as the court and jury seldom or never gave serious damages in such causes, which were treated as petty tavern broils, even where limbs have been broken, or eyes knocked out; nothing of a loss; except the loss of a life, or so, could be attended with serious effects to the aggressors.

But this sort of defensive warfare only, the parties never conceived themselves confined to in all circumstances connected with the original cause of quarrel. Therefore, as soon as they understood that Cankergrin was aided and abetted by Scumble, who on his own account thought it most prudent to see the issue of the indictment before he ventured to commence prosecution, they immediately set their solicitor at work to renew their suit respecting the libel, and empowered him to communicate the reason of his proceeding.

In a short time, the bill which Canker-

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grin preferred against the noble partners came on to be found at Hicks's Hall; but whether owing to a trick played him by some agent of the defendant, or of some other enemy, of which the *good-natured* plaintiff was not without his share, certain it is, that on the night previous to the day which the grand jury were to decide upon the bill he had filed, Mr. Cankergrin sat off in the coach for Salisbury on a picture expedition; and did not return to town again, till the day after that on which his bill was quashed, for want of his personal attendance with his witnesses. And in order to fill the bitter cup of his disappointment, after finding the house with much difficulty, in which he was led to believe there were two or three fine pictures by Wouvermans, and as many by Gaspar Poussin; he had the mortification to find these chef d'œuvres were no more than indifferent pictures by old Wyke, and the fine Poussins nothing better than damaged landscapes by Horrizonti; all of which being very dirty, and loaded with copal varnish, were really not worth the trouble

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of cleaning. The vexation arising from these accumulated disasters, had such an effect upon the *wormwood* constitution of Cankergrin, as to cause an unusual overflow of the gall, which changed a countenance naturally cadaverous to a yellow green, and he appeared *a frightful mass of walking putridity.*

Nothing could equal the triumph of the unfeeling partizans of the new picture firm, upon this melancholy occasion; and they were inhuman enough to crack their jokes upon their brother in affliction, whose bodily infirmities were certainly beyond a joke. They compared the disordered tints of his skin to a *painter's smutch-pan*, where yellow ochre was the most predominant: others declared him a living emblem of an *old picture* whose lining was *mildewed*, and whose surface was loaded with yellow varnish to conceal *the deformity* of what *was underneath.* Some talked of raising a subscription to convey him to Hertfordshire, about reaping time, *for the preservation of the grain*, from the feathered depredators;

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but this was objected to, for the *sake of the pregnant women*, who might have the misfortune to meet, or see him in his journey. In fact, though Mr. Cankergrin was one of the most envious slanderers of all the rancorous group he in some measure presided over, yet was he to be pitied in the situation he was thus reduced to, and the only plea his friends, as they are usually called, could offer in extenuation of his daily course of ill-nature, may be admitted by all those, who are fortunate enough to be beyond the vortex of his constitutional malice; namely, "*that he could not help it.*"

As to Mr. Scumble, he was seldom seen among his brethren since the trick which caused his friend's disgrace, and their opponent's triumph, had been played off; and about this period happened to be laid up with a fit of the gout. In the mean time the new firm was proceeding very rapidly, in arranging, and hanging their collection previous to a grand private view, which the first personages in the kingdom were to

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honour with their presence; and tickets were issuing for the purpose, to obtain one of which, was a matter of the first consequence. But what gave complete publicity to the undertaking, was the rumour of the approaching trial, which circumstance brought numbers to see the wonderful production upon which so much depended; and although few, very few indeed, were permitted to view such a jewel, several were vain enough to boast of that favour. By this means the fame of our subject was spread far and wide; and a noble duke, justly celebrated for his liberality throughout the craft, and amongst the connoisseurs, for his fine collection, applied by a very polite note to the proprietors for the favour of a view. This request was immediately complied with, and the chevalier in person waited upon his grace to know when it would be convenient for him to honour them with a visit at the gallery, where as many of his friends as his grace thought proper to invite, would add to this very distinguished mark of his grace's notice. Early in the morning of the appointed day,

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when the duke and his party were to sanction the new firm with their countenance and approbation, the partners arose, and copied a descriptive list of twenty of their best pictures for the use of their noble visitors, all which they numbered, to add to the convenience of pointing them out with more facility amongst such a quantity. In this small catalogue, one of the most conspicuous articles was our picture; and annexed, was a sketch of its supposed origin, and the means by which it was, at a vast expence, brought into this country. While the chevalier was running over this catalogue, his partner went round the cabinet-room to see that all the articles were placed in the most advantageous light; but when he came to that side of the room where hung the principal attraction, he beheld nothing but the empty space which that divine production had occupied but the very day before. It is scarcely possible for words to describe the consternation of the great Des-chong-fong upon this occasion; he fixed his disconsolate eyes on the vacant space! then turned them in despair upon

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his wondering partner, the confounded chevalier, without uttering a sentence. For some moments this dumb shew of significant embarrassment continued, till at length the chevalier perceiving the cause of all this silent frenzy, exclaimed in broken English—"Blass my soul, vat is to be done now? Oh mon dieu, it vill be ruin us; O got blass a my—lord duke—he comes do day!—no Guido—no—no! ve vill be ruin! his Mayesty vil no pardon amois, vor de disappoint. "His partner, as soon as he found utterance, gave vent to his feelings in a very different spirit, and cursed the whole nation for a set of thieves and encouragers of plunder, by sea and by land. And *threatened*, if the thief was not immediately discovered and *hanged*, to revenge himself for so great an insult, by quitting the country in twenty-four hours, with all his remaining chef-d'œuvres; *and finally to stir up the Great Mogul, his master, to annihilate the whole island.*

Having spent some time in venting such incoherent soliloquies, alternately, they

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proceeded to the more rational mode of examining the men employed about the house, who assisted in hanging the pictures, but without the least effect. Some of their friends that had been sent for now arrived, and advised the apprehension of all the persons about the gallery, as it was more likely to extort the truth at such a tribunal *as Bow Street*, before a magistrate, armed as they are, with their terrors and penetration, than in private, before those who had no such means of discovering the truth. But this was over-ruled by the assertion of the chevalier, who declared there was no person had access to the gallery from six o'clock last evening, till his partner and himself entered it this morning; that he was sure of the picture being then in its place, and therefore it must have been taken away in the course of the night.

However this might be, certain it is, that the picture was not to be found, and the lord duke and his friends came according to appointment, and were disappointed, to the great disgrace and chagrin of the *new*

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firm, and the perfect satisfaction of all their envious brethren; but to none more *than Scumble, and his jackall Cankergrin;* the latter of whom swore the *foreign rascals stole their own picture* to save them from the derision of those illustrious connoisseurs, who could have detected the spurious production; and therefore, would have been the most competent witnesses in the approaching cause, on the part of Mr. Scumble. But in this, as in a hundred cases, Cankergrin was, we can assure our readers, completely mistaken; as shall fully appear in the subsequent pages of these authentic Memoirs.

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CHAP. XVIII.

OF THE MEASURES TAKEN FOR THE RECOVERY OF THE PICTURE—ANECDOTES OF PLEBEIAN PICTURE-DEALERS—GROSS IGNORANCE OF THE ARTS IN A DEALER, GENERALLY COMPENSATED BY THE NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS IT SELDOM FAILS TO ATTRACT.

AMONGST a number of means resorted to by the *firm* for the recovery of their invaluable gem, hand-bills and advertisements were some of the first; and the persevring industry of the partners, and several of their friends, in searching amongst brokers, and pawnbrokers' shops, was, though not successful, deserving of great commendation. It is true indeed, that the magisterial airs they at first assumed in demanding a sight of all the pictures in a broker's possession,

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were not altogether consistent with the free spirit of our laws, which guarantees to each man the uninterrupted possession of his own house as an impregnable castle, which no man dare enter but by due authority constituted by the law. Now as our illustrious partners had no idea of such privileges being granted to a set of persons whom they deemed unworthy of all legal protection, they now and then had liked to have paid very dear for their ignorance in this essential point. But with the pawnbrokers, they were still more irregular in their first proceedings; for upon entering any of these worthy persons' shops with such peremptory interrogatories, they being unable to produce a search-warrant to back such demands, seldom or never escaped a torrent of abuse, for supposing *there were any fools in such a business* weak enough to produce stolen goods to the owner, without being compelled to do it. In time, however, they were enabled, through the kind instruction of their friends, to pursue their enquiries without giving offence, and with more likelihood of success.

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One fine morning, in the month of June, as they were perambulating with an English friend, about the east end of the town, in search of their beloved Guido, a small picture, hanging at a broker's door, attracted their notice, and they crossed a narrow street in order to inspect it more accurately. The proprietor of this shop, a good jolly-looking fellow, whose chief traffic was in old iron and lead, seeing three men genteelly dressed cross over and stop at his door in the sight of his neighbours, felt himself something elated at this distinction; and when he was asked the price of the picture, answered with one of his lowest bows, "one guinea gemmem, and I am sure that's cheap enough in all conscience—that it is, dog-cheap."—One of the three gentlemen, who was an artist as well as the chevalier, and who also knew as well, that what the broker said was very true, about the moderation of his price; yet from a habit contracted by long practice in his dealings with brokers and picture-merchants, always bid one half of whatever sum they asked if he was inclined to purchase; but when

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he had no inclination to buy, either from the price demanded being too much for him to venture his usual offer of an half, or his dislike to the picture; in either of these cases he was sure to be extremely liberal in his praise of the merit of such gems, and always declared he thought they asked little enough. But on the contrary, where he was resolved to buy, let the price asked be ever so moderate, he always bid one half, and took care to undervalue the picture as much as possible. When, therefore, the broker so emphatically insisted upon the moderation of his demand, the *English artist*, who was extremely inquisitive, asked him how he could be sure of his picture being cheap at a guinea? The other replied —"Why, look ye, gemmen, I don't pretend to any great judgment in this here business, but I know my neighbour Cullender, who kept yon cook's-shop, at that there corner, gave one o' your foreigners, a capital judge, more dinners than came to three guineas, upon that there very identical picture, besides several half-crowns for drink; and though he's dead now, one may say there wa'n't the

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fellow of him in judgment in twenty parishes for all his compacity. And if he lived, I'se warrant he'd a ne'er lost sixpence by it—Lord! it would ha' done one good to hear him speak about your *Tishuans, Raffles, Clods,* and your *Piss-hangs.* As for this here picture, I've heard him, many o' the time, talk about what a fine *come physician* it is, and the subject so high-learned: why this here picture, you must know gemmen, is painted by that same great *Tishuan,* it is the *three fat sisters threading the needle of life.*" Notwithstanding all this fund of information, the native artist before mentioned bid the communicative broker ten and sixpence for his picture, which really was a sketch by the immortal Titian, and the subject was, the three fatal sisters cutting the thread of life. It is true indeed the picture had been very much damaged, and part of the glazing destroyed by an experiment tried upon it, by a celebrated portrait painter, of the first eminence in his profession, who had very unfairly practised a little too much upon it with a strong alcali, before he paid for it; and finding it

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not quite so easy to clean pictures, as to paint them, returned it to the owner ten pounds the worse, for this his ingenious experimental destruction. The chevalier blushed for the credit of his profession, as he put the guinea into the broker's hand, and told him as well as he could in English, that his friend was merely jocular, and would reward him in earnest for any old picture that might strike his fancy. The broker at this pricked up his ears, and told them, since he saw they were real judges, and no pretended artists, he would take the trouble of bringing them two or three more from the same quarter, and begged them just to step in and look about his wareroom, where there happened to be ten or a dozen old portraits, by Sir Peter Lely, and Sir Godfrey Kneller, and one by Zuccharo. With these productions the artists amused themselves, till the broker returned with two historical pictures, saying, that if so be they had a mind to help the widow and the fatherless, now was the time; and as she had fixed no particular price, it was left entirely to their honour whatever they

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thought proper to value them at. "This here, gemmen," said the loquacious broker, "is a monstrous clever sort of a history picture, I can assure you; and I've often heard my old friend *Cullender*, say it was painted by a great *foreign hartist* he called *Jerry Laress*, and the story you may see, gemmen, is *Hur-kill-us decoying the Harpers*. Now as for t'other, we none of us could ever make out, further then this here great fat figure, d'y' see, benotes *Backhouse the god of vine*, and them there *man-goats* prancing about must be *slaters*; but for the naked lady, any fool may tell what her is—she's *Wenus*, you know, gemmen, the goddess of beauty.—Howsomdever, call the story what ye please, we all know it's a monstrous fine painting, and nobody 'il go to say it is n't painted by *Piss-hang*; I'm sure nobody won't deny that." For the honour of our dear country, the two foreigners understood very little of the broker's display of knowledge in the arts; and the artist with them, who was a member of our Royal Academy, had been so much accustomed to every species of picture-dealing jargon, in his

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search of bargains among the trade, that no ignorance, however humourously displayed, could divert him from his purpose of driving a hard bargain. And whilst the two foreigners were examining the remains of a very fine picture, by Nichola Poussin, of the Triumph of Bacchus, our artist, much to the credit of his heart, and quite contrary to his usual custom, offered five guineas for the two pictures, merely to serve the widow and children; and the broker took him at his word, only requesting half-a-crown for himself to drink the healths of such humane customers. The bargain being thus struck, the chevalier and his friend were made acquainted with the terms, and agreed to visit the widow and children; and if they found the broker's story true, were resolved to add five pieces more to the sum already agreed on. For as to the first picture described by the broker, although it was a production of merit from the pencil of Gerhard Larresse, who wrote upon the subject of his profession, like many others, much better than he could paint; yet it was hard, and had all the flutter about it so

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peculiar to the French manner. The subject too was disgustingly treated, it was Hercules destroying the Harpies, and the effects of his destruction were scattered all over the foreground, which was one mass of blood and brains, so naturally painted as to shock every beholder. Therefore, two or three guineas at most was as much as could reasonably be expected for it: the Poussin indeed, though much injured, was still within the pale of restoration, and when complete, would certainly command fifty or sixty guineas; so that all things considered, there was a *tolerable scope* for the exercise of benevolence, without *encroaching* upon the *boundaries of prudence.*

Having agreed upon this visit to the widow and fatherless, they crossed the way with the honest broker, and were introduced to the widow, a clean pretty woman about forty, who just before they entered was ruminating upon the loss she was likely to sustain in having a quarter of house-lamb and a quantity of green peas, left upon her hands. This being a dinner or-

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dered by a third mate of an Indiaman, for himself and his sweetheart, who was to send in the wine at twelve o'clock, and St. Catherine's had just struck two as the party entered, whom as she afterwards gratefully acknowledged, Providence had sent to make her heart glad. Having beckoned the good woman up stairs, the broker shewed them into a neat cleanly room where a table was set out in the best manner for the reception of her expected guests: the gentleman indeed, she said, was her own nephew, though he would never forgive her if she was to make that public, and the last in the world that should think of playing her such a trick. The broker told her to be of good cheer, for instead of two nasty old rubbishing pictures, that he could have bought at any sale for five shillings apiece, he had brought her five guineas which the gentlemen were so kind as to give her, and not for the matter of value of the pictures. The sight of the five pieces had such an effect upon the poor widow that she could scarcely refrain from tears; but when the chevalier added five more, she could no

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longer repress her feelings; but throwing herself at their feet, poured forth a torrent of grateful tears, accompanied by sobs and prayers for their eternal happiness. Indeed the scene was so natural and affecting, that the stoical firmness of the *great Des-chong-fong* was subdued, and he was obliged more than once, during the widow's pathetic address, to have recourse to his handkerchief. As soon as they could raise the grateful widow from her prostrate attitude, they gave her to understand that they intended to be her guests at dinner, provided her nephew did not keep his appointment, and that they would just take a stroll about the neighbourhood for an hour or so, and if he should arrive in the interim, to keep a couple of plates of some nice beef she had boiled to cut out cold at night, and that, with some greens, would be all that was necessary. They moreover rewarded the broker with an extra crown for his honest conduct to the widow; and this circumstance we are the more proud of relating, as the said broker has since then become a very great, or which is the same, a very rich man, princi-

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pally owing to his ignorance of the merit of what he dealt in at length so largely as to sell pictures by the score; and in the whole course of his biography, subsequent to the above act of kindness to the widow, we cannot find a single instance of either honour or honesty interfering with his interest. So predominant is avarice, and so callous is selfishness, that were we to record a thousandth part of the facts which have fallen within our own observation, of the wickedness and injustice to which this selfish passion hath led; we might be suspected of leaning too strongly towards misanthropy.

Returning with the broker to his ware-room, they soon agreed with him for three of the best of his portraits, though by no means so cheaply as they might have done before he saw so much of their generosity; and thinking that he had a right to partake of some part of it as well as the widow, notwithstanding he knew she stood most in need of it, certainly asked three times the sum he at first intended. Thus,

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having demanded thirty shillings a-piece for what they chose, the native artist, after some haggling, bought them for just one half, being two pounds five shillings; and when the five shillings were deducted, for that was rather more than they stood him in, the broker was then forty shillings clear in pocket. Yet, except to an artist, many of whom have been known to give a guinea for all that remained of an old portrait, namely, a hand, or a piece of drapery, the three pictures would have been sold well at half-a-crown; when it is considered how uninteresting old portraits of obscure persons are; and if not by the hand of some great master, and well preserved, they seldom deserve the canvas that has been wasted upon such maukish resemblances of inanity.

After giving the broker a description of the picture they came in quest of, and promising a handsome reward in case of his being able to discover where it was, they desired him to tie up their five pictures,

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which they meant to call for in the evening, and take away in a coach.

They next visited a pawnbroker's in the neighbourhood, who exhibited several specimens of the art in his window, and outside of the door, where a crowd of *third-rate connoisseurs* hovered generally once or twice in a month, in search of the works of Titian and Corregio, and the sublime bits of the Carracci, which fortune might kindly throw in their way, *at twelve, or even fifteen shillings a-piece.* One of the above description of amateurs, a very worthy gentleman, in whose society we have spent many an happy hour, had been thus collecting for more than seven years, chiefly under the auspices of a minor artist, whose means, very fortunately for his family, were as circumscribed as his judgment; and in the course of that time, the former had been so uncommonly lucky in his purchases, as to get possession of several gems of Rubens, Salvator Rosa, Teniers, Raphael, Poussin, Claude, and Vandyke; with twenty others of inferior name. So

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perfectly convinced was our connoisseur of the reality of this delusion, that, as a particular mark of favour conferred upon a new acquaintance, he would indulge them with a view of his exquisite collection, to afford him an opportunity of boasting that he had seen one of the finest collections in England. And so entirely had he prepossessed *his lady with this opinion*, that some time after his demise, she called upon one of the most distinguished orators of the hammer, in order to regulate and determine upon the best mode of announcing a sale of such consequence as her's would be.

The politeness of this celebrated disposer of effects induced him to send one of his dependant *fac-totums* with the lady to take an inventory of the grand collection; who having given the lady to understand, that so far from the pictures being of consequence to deserve any particular mode of announcing their disposal to the public, they could only be brought in at the beginning, or fag end of a clearing sale. This was resented in so haughty a manner, that the

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lady actually brought the great orator himself to witness the ignorance of the person he had entrusted. But when the verdict was given by him in favour of his friend's judgment, though couched in the most polite and delicate terms, yet the lady was so far tenacious of her own opinion, and the interest she felt in supporting it, that she discarded Mr. Plausible; and he deemed himself fortunate in escaping the trouble of such a sale. After repeated efforts to convince a number of persons against the conviction of their eye-sight, of the identity and genuineness of the collection, she at last consented to oblige the public with an opportunity of adding to their collections, and *upwards of one hundred of these chef-d'œuvres* were submitted to their protection, which *netted the fair proprietress thirty-seven pounds nineteen shillings*, after all *the expences* of the sale were deducted.

But to return to our respectable partners of the new picture-gallery, whom we left amongst a crowd of gentlemen speculators, admiring, in all probability, some of the

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very gems which formed a part of the grand collection we have just related the sacrifice of; when, after prying about without discovering what they wanted, and not perceiving any of the present stock likely to add much credit to their's, they adjourned to the widow's a little after their appointment. The good woman had been expecting them with the greatest impatience, and all her five children were ranged in order to pay their respect and gratitude to their benefactors. They were, in a word, very clean and pretty creatures; and two of the eldest waited upon our partners so much to their satisfaction, that they were determined to provide for them as soon as ever they commenced house-keeping. Having sent in from a neighbouring wine-vaults, a couple of bottles of the best red port, and a bottle of sherry, they made a very comfortable and cheerful repast; and sending for their hostess, prevailed upon her to take three or four glasses of wine, which so loosened the good creature's tongue, that she recounted all her recent troubles, which arose principally, she said,

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from her dear husband's attachment to artists and their works, which he indulged his taste for, to an imprudent length; particularly situated as he was, in a part of the town, where scarce any person but himself knew the value of the pictures he bought. That he had contracted this unfortunate liking for pictures while abroad in his younger days, having had the honour of being valet to a very capital painter then abroad for study. In short, that after he died, she was advised to turn every thing she had into money, by her friends; she at length consented to include her dear man's favourite pictures, together with some left there in pledge for dinners by a great dealer; and who was also a very great eater, so that *when he paid* they were never afraid of losing by a joint or two extraordinary, for the gentleman was nearly master of any reasonable sized leg or shoulder that ever was spitted. But to be sure he was generous enough when he had it, and always left value enough for what he had. Indeed, she believed, he had eaten out not less than a dozen large pictures in less than

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six months. And her dear husband was so partial to him, that he would always procure him any dainty in season. However, all the sale produced, had just enabled her to pay every body, and start afresh, and alone, with the little things they saw about her, to struggle for a bit of bread for the pretty dears Providence had left her; and that Providence would, she had no doubt, enable her to provide for them all. In short, the artless manner in which the pretty widow told her little history of humble distress, greatly interested her genteel hearers; and the chevalier and his two friends promised never to lose sight of her whilst she continued to merit their protection. With this view they gave the pretty widow their address, desiring her upon any emergency to write or send, and not to be afraid of troubling either of them, or their friend, her countryman, who also gave his place of abode.

It now drew near seven o'clock, and they were just taking their leave of the grateful widow, when a young sea-faring, and gen-

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teel looking fellow, with a very elegantly dressed female, accosted the widow, with a—"Ya hoy, mistress—all the provisions stowed away I doubt."—The widow answered, "Indeed, my dear, you have staid so long beyond all reasonable time"—she was proceeding, when the chevalier happening to cast his eyes upon the sailor's sweetheart, to his inexpressible surprise he encountered the piercing lovely black eyes of his mistress, the individual Miss Sophia, Scumble's *darling niece*. Whether a returning sentiment of sneaking affection alarmed the chevalier, or a more noble one of avoiding an occasion that might raise a blush in the cheek of the lady, and so mar her present happiness but for a moment, we cannot particularly decide; but he escaped from his friends with uncommon precipitation. His partner, who happening to catch a glimpse of the lady about the same time, was at no loss to account for his friend's retreat, and the *English artist* attributed it to the effects of the wine, and immediately sat off in pursuit of the che-

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valier, whom he knew to be a stranger of, and liable to lose his way at that end of the town. The faithful ambassador of the Great Mogul followed his friends as fast as he was able, and they had reached Tower Hill before they overtook the fugitive; and there it was our native artist recollected that their bargain was left behind, and the five pictures remained at the broker's, and as his suspicions whispered, very unluckily all paid for. They after a short consultation, however, called a coach in the Minories, and drove back to the broker's, where they waited in the coach, till his wife sent for him to a public house a little way off; and when he arrived, he either did not, or would not know them, until the artist with great firmness declared he would have him before his betters instantly. And as the sitting magistrate was his particular friend, who presided in the police department at that end of the town, his name being once mentioned, had such an effect that he quickly produced the pictures; our broker having the same antipathy to that

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stern northern magistrate's name, which the whole tribe of depredators used to exhibit on hearing the sound of Sir John Fieldings.

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CHAP. XIX.

OF THE MISTAKES OCCASIONED BY THE APPEARANCE OF A PICTURE BEARING SO STRONG A KINDRED RESEMBLANCE TO THE ONE STOLEN, AS TO PASS NOT ONLY FOR A TWIN RELATIVE, BUT THE VERY IDENTICAL GEM BELONGING TO HIS EXCELLENCY DES-CHONG-FONG, &c.

AFTER a lapse of several months, when every method had been taken likely to recover the lost gem to the proprietors of the new firm; and just as they were about to open, bereft as they were of their chief attraction, a sudden ray of hope inspired them with fresh confidence of being once more in possession of that matchless effort of the sublime Guido. It may be necessary to inform our readers, that much to

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the credit of the proprietors of the *new picture gallery*, they had, in less than seven months after their plan was announced, acquired so much reputation for their judgment and taste in the arcana of picturecraft, as caused several second-rate connoisseurs to refer many disputes to their decision. Not merely disputes about the originality of pictures only, but respecting the comparative merits of former, as well as cotemporary artists. And what may appear still more surprising is, that from their decision, there was seldom known any one so hardy as to appeal. From a skilful management of this predilection in favour of their judgment, their house became in so shorta period, a sort of emporium of taste. And few, except those who composed that stubborn native phalanx, who were so ridiculous as to make use of their own optics, and mad enough to judge for themselves, disputed the sway of the *Des-chong-fongarian school.*

Whilst the fame of the above-mentioned school was every day increasing; a sort of

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opposition started up in a quarter where of all others it was least expected, and where a taste for the arts it was thought could never prevail. This was no other than the maritime town of Liverpool, where, by the exertions of one man, thousands of pictures have been sold annually, for very liberal and encouraging prices. This gentleman, in his various excursions to London and other markets, for several years had in reality some foundation for presuming a little upon the judgment thus acquired; and, notwithstanding his natural predilection for the works of some of his countrymen, had a tolerable eye, as we say, for some of the sublime productions of the old school. Another circumstance, it must be confessed, tended not a little to bias him in favour of our native artists, and that was, the ready market he generally found all over the country for their productions; and as hitherto the inhabitants of this island, London excepted, have not arrived to that refinement in taste, which induces persons to purchase at exorbitant prices what they do not understand. Now your true

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John Bulls are notorious, when left to the guidance of their own sound understanding, to prefer nothing which is beyond the cognizance of that unbiassed judgment. Hence their notorious partiality for the works of such English painters as Wilson, Wright of Darby, Gainsborough, Morland, Barrett, Pether, Anderson, and some few others, whose forte is the simple unadorned scenes of genuine humble nature.

And here we must entreat our brethren to observe how extremely cautious we have been, in this short digression, of giving offence to their superior science, particularly as we have substituted the plain English plural substantive—painters, for the more refined one of—artists; and we humbly submit to their orthodox opinion respecting the difference between the two phrases.—Namely, that whoever hath not genius enough to soar above, and deviate from every resemblance throughout the whole of nature, in their productions, is totally unworthy of the latter appellation: And on the contrary, whoever servilely

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descends to copy the rustic beauties of this simple goddess, must be content with the *humble title of painter.*

But to return to our Liverpool picture-merchant, who had resolved upon an excursion to London, about the period already mentioned, from a very different motive to any which had ever before influenced him to undertake that journey. Inasmuch as all his former visits to the metropolis were to purchase, he now for the first time came purposely to sell. We have already apprized the reader of the judgment our country dealer had acquired of the sublime productions of the old school; depending solely upon his own stock of that unprofitable ingredient in a number of instances, he made a purchase of two such pictures at Liverpool, as he thought could not fail of making his fortune in London. For of all the gentlemen within several miles' circuit of where his home was, he had not been so fortunate as to receive an offer beyond what they had cost him. He therefore, with the advice of some country artists, determined upon

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offering them to some of the distinguished connoisseurs of the capital of the British empire.

Arriving safely with his prizes, he lost no time in consulting two or three friends upon whose judgment he could rely, respecting the price he ought to fix upon them; for as to any other consideration, he was too confident in his own judgment to trouble them with any question likely to disturb or shake that confidence. A meddling sort of a busy friend, however, hearing of his arrival in town, called upon him one morning in the way of business, having on all former occasions sold him pictures which answered the country market well. Being upon very good terms, and known to the persons where he usually lodged, finding he was not yet stirring, walked up to the drawing-room, where he waited, having sent up his name, for his friend's coming down stairs. Casting his eye about the room he saw in a corner two packing-cases, and judging rightly they contained pictures, he, sans ceremony, began to examine

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them, when he found the lids of the cases loose; he lifted one, which contained a very pretty picture in the manner of Salvator Rosa, St. John preaching in the wilderness. But the other was really that which contained a gem indeed; and although he had then no conception of its being a very old picture from the state of high preservation it appeared in, still less had he of its being the production of the immortal Raphael, for so his friend assured him it was, who came down stairs unperceived while this meddler was lost in contemplating the beauty of the performance. Upon this occasion, as upon several more recent ones, the busy body, who had thus satisfied his curiosity, had reason to repent giving an honest opinion to those whom a sort of gratitude told him he ought not to trifle with; for being asked his opinion respecting the price his friend should put upon the Salvator Rosa, before he could answer, the question was put to him whether five hundred guineas were too much to ask the Duke of ——, to whom he was to shew it that morning. The simpleton thus questioned, not satisfied with answering both these ques-

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tions quite contrary to the hopes and expectation of his friend, told him in addition, that it was no Salvator, nor even a copy, but a true production of Adrian Van Diest, in Rosa's manner. The other, scarcely able to contain his vexation, told him he supposed the little historical picture was by Van Diest also—to which Raphael himself had given life and soul. Still imprudent, unforewarned, the simpleton answered it was as much the production of the one, as of the other; but acknowledged it was infinitely superior to the picture of St. John in the Wilderness. The Liverpool amateur out of all patience, demanded pettishly, if it was not of Raphael's pencil, whose then was it? To which his friend calmly replied, "Though one can with some degree of reason aver whose it is not, we can by no means speak with the same degree of certainty of whose hand it positively is; for that you must allow would be presumption in respect to any picture painted a hundred years back. And though a negative, in all other cases, is the most difficult side to maintain, in the business of picture-dealing, it is not only the safest to adopt, but the

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most wise, especially in all matters of purchase." The answer was a direct challenge to wager a certain sum, amounting to the payment of a rump and dozen, that an equal number of the best judges should be named on both sides, and the verdict of the majority should be decisive. This being accepted by the simpleton, a day was appointed for nominating the judges who were to decide this knotty question, and the friends separated, but never met again with the same frankness as before this contention.

As soon as the simple picture-dealer withdrew, the Liverpool connoisseur determined never more to consult his opinion, and he flattered himself that he had discovered the motive of Mr. Simpleton, in depreciating the merit and value of his two capital pictures, and that was envy, which he knew by experience, had a considerable influence over the opinions of at least nine tenths of the profession. He therefore prepared for his intended visit to his grace with additional confidence in his own judgment,

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anticipating the triumph he should enjoy over his friend, by the success he expected at the duke's.

Arriving at the wished-for haven with his precious morceaus, he did not wait long for an interview with his grace, that amiable nobleman never suffering the meanest petitioner to wait long in suspense; and a fine picture was ever the surest passport to an interview, let the party that brought it be ever so humble in their appearance. It happened on this morning that the duke had several foreign noblemen with him, as well as some of the most eminent natives, all of whom were real connoisseurs. In addition to this tasteful group there were three artists of acknowledged judgment, in restoring, cleaning, and baptising both the legitimate, and spurious offspring of all the celebrated masters of antiquity. Before this tribunal the two chef-d'œuvres were submitted for the approbation and purchase of his grace, their owner positively asserting them to be the undoubted productions of the great

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men already mentioned. But the noble duke, who had then in his fine collection several capital specimens of Salvator, and two or three by Raphael, only smiled at the assertion, and politely invited the Liverpool amateur to view them in his gallery. When they compared the pictures, the difference was so obvious to our country dealer, who had never before such an opportunity of being convinced, that he felt the confidence with which he entered the nobleman's mansion, dwindled into complete humiliation. But the duke perceiving his confusion, was of too noble a mind to increase it by any observations, or suffer those, who were but two ready to add to the mortification of any one that was presumptuous enough to christen their own property, to indulge their critical humour at the expence of suffering ignorance. For it was clear, from his story and the price he gave, that no imposition was intended, and therefore the man only asserted what he paid dearly for believing; and want of knowledge should never be confounded, with a total absence of common honesty. And to convince

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our amateur that his grace was conscious of the distinction in the present instance, he offered to reimburse him all the expences of his journey to London in addition to what the little historical picture which he called Raphael had cost him. But the other, his grace observed, was painted by a man who had produced too many specimens, none of which was enough beyond mediocrity to merit a place in his collection. This offer was civilly declined by our country speculator, which he has regretted ever since; and taking leave of his grace, drove home with his bargain, encumbered with an additional load of mortification and disappointment.

There is one advantage, and that a very consolatory one indeed, to every being who is fortunate enough in having even small means, that in this metropolis the wearied in body or in mind may unburthen themselves, and throw down their load at hundreds of convenient places, such as no other city in the world can boast. And as at every pitching-block in this town, the tired brawny

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porter finds a friendly brother to assist him with his load; so indeed may the over-burthened in mind be as certain of the friendly aid of the votaries of mirth in casting his whole weight of dull care behind him. Our Liverpool speculator on the present occasion, confessed the truth of this comforting remark; and having dined and supped out, returned to his lodgings as light of heart, and as full of hope in his bargain as ever. For meeting with a few choice spirits, several of whom were dealers in picture-craft, and a few tolerable artists; they inspired him with such expectations from submitting his *pictures to the new firm*, that he became quite elated with this prospect of success, and determined to wait on the illustrious amateurs.

Accordingly, about ten, our speculator set out with his bargain, accompanied by an artist, who was employed by the new firm to restore the ravages of time, or accident, and to renovate the perishing canvas with a comfortable lining. Luckily, said one of the attendants, upon the en-

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quiry of our dealer and his friend, both the gentlemen are in the way; and he ran up to announce their arrival to these great masters of science. The artist having introduced his friend as a very considerable dealer from such a town as Liverpool, the gentlemen received him with much ceremonious civility; and upon his intimating the business he came upon, they begged to see the gems he spoke of. The first shewn them was the supposed Salvator Rosa, which having undergone the fiery ordeal of foreign criticism, they pronounced a copy, with such dignity of emphasis as confirmed their verdict beyond all further appeal. They next were presented with the Raphael; but, upon the very first glance, they exclaimed, in a transport of joy, their interest in this invaluable gem, which had thus, as by a miracle, after all their pains and expence to no purpose, fallen into their longing arms, when every hope of its recovery was for the present completely blasted. The surprise of the Liverpool merchant, and his friend the artist, was equal to the extravagance of the

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two partners; and a more ridiculous group of outré physiognomies hath seldom been exhibited by even Hogarth himself.

After a short pause, the merchant assured them the pictures were fairly and truly his property; and he was pretty confident neither of them were ever in England before; that they were taken from on board a prize by a townsman of his, who commanded a privateer several months ago, just upon the commencement of the war with France; that this captain had divided all the cargo of the prize between his men, reserving nothing but these two pictures, and a few busts, for himself, all of which were taken to the captain's house from the prize, and had never since been out of his possession, till they came into his, the present claimant. All this was supported by the artist, who had heard the same history from the merchant, the night before, and who gave him an excellent character to his employers of the new *picture firm*. But all they could urge was of no avail; the little Guido, and painted upon copper too,

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was not to be wrested from them upon such easy terms. After a vast deal of bitter altercation, in the course of which many invectives were used on both sides, which, as they reflect no great credit upon the professors of picturecraft, we shall forbear to relate, the Lancashire dealer was obliged to retire without his picture. He immediately called upon his attorney, and related the whole story, who undertook to call upon the gentlemen of the new firm, and if possible explain the mistake, which it was evident to him they must have fallen into.

Accordingly, in the afternoon of the same day, he called upon them, and endeavoured by every argument in his power to convince them of their error, and the disagreeable consequences which would inevitably attend their detaining the picture, to which his client could prove an undoubted right. But after all his pains, they remained inflexible; and he took his leave, satisfied with having done his duty, and

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related to his client the ill success of his visit.

The consequence was, an action was obliged to be commenced for the recovery of the picture; and as the Lancashire dealer wanted to leave town, another interview was had with the proprietors of the new gallery; who being confirmed in their opinion, by the general voice of all whom they consulted, of the identity of the picture; became more obstinate than ever, and set their opponents at defiance.

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CHAP. XX.

MR. BIDFAIR, THE LIVERPOOL DEALER, RETURNS HOME—CONSULTS HIS TOWNSMAN, CAPTAIN BOARDALL, RESPECTING THE PICTURES BOUGHT OF HIM—ADVENTURES OF MADEMOISELLE JULIA ST. PRIEUX AND MR. GLAZETINT, THE CELEBRATED FLEMISH COPYIST.

MR. BIDFAIR having dispatched his business in town, agreeably to the instructions of his attorney, lost no time in returning to Liverpool, to procure all the proofs necessary of his purchase, before the captain of the privateer proceeded on another cruise, the events of which might otherwise deprive him of his evidence. Upon his arrival, therefore, he immediately waited upon Captain Boardall, and luckily

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finding him at home, communicated the disagreeable scrape into which he had been drawn, arising from some mistake about one of the pictures he purchased of him a few months since. Also the necessity he was under of collecting all the circumstances he could relative to the means by which the captain became possessed of it, and particularly the exact period when; as the parties who had detained it could actually prove the loss of a picture so very like it, that several persons were ready to swear to this being the very picture so stolen. So that all he had to depend on was the difference in the time between each party's being in possession of his respective picture. For if the captain obtained his, subsequent to the other's being stolen, the resemblance was so strong, and the witnesses so positive, that he was in great doubt about the issue of the cause.

The captain assured him very frankly, that whether the time made for or against him he could not tell; but with respect to the certainty of it, the ship's journals would

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belay all jaw upon that tack; and that he might depend upon his townsman never sheering off while there was any danger of his friend running ashore; but if they should be out a little in their reckoning, there was still a best *bower-anchor* left, which must bring them safe up in plenty of water, and a *good bottom.* But he supposed there was no gale so heavy, but they might weather, without *letting go* that *anchor*; because he should not like much to expose the secrets of any person's log-book, *especially a stranger, and a lady.*

Mr. Bidfair, who understood all but the captain's last allusion, after some pains, learned from his friend's dialect, that at the time his men boarded, and took *the French lugger*, a very beautiful young lady was wringing her hands, and tearing her hair upon the quarter-deck, and throwing herself alongside the dead body of a handsome young man, clinging to it so close, that they with much difficulty could remove her. That this young gentleman, the captain of the lugger's brother, killed

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in the engagement also, was the sweetheart of the lady, and the pictures belonged to him; they were bound to Cadiz, before they were taken, and this young lady was now a few miles from Liverpool, with captain Boardall's mother. So that *her evidence* was the *best bower-anchor*, the captain meant should bring them up, in case they could not succeed without her; and the reluctance he expressed at calling upon her, without absolute necessity, because of her being obliged to reveal her story, did the greatest honour to his head and heart, and evinces one of the generous and manly characteristics of a *british tar*; for which they are as eminently distinguished, as for their unequalled skill and bravery, during the most perilous trials.

Mr. Bidfair assured his friend, that nothing short of the loss of his cause, and with it his picture, should induce him to trouble the young lady; and after mutual civilities, and a hearty shake of the hand, they parted, but not before the captain had promised to introduce his friend, accompanied by his amiable daughter Matilda

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Bidfair, to the acquaintance of the beautiful French-woman, for so the captain described her.

Amongst the numerous evils attendant upon that most destructive *plague* of human happiness, *war*, inoffensive passengers, going from one port to another, upon various emergencies, totally unconnected with the sanguinary trade, or its followers, too often suffer more than an equal share of its miserable consequences. The industrious merchant, with his family and effects, endeavouring to escape from its horrors on shore, meets a tenfold bitter portion of its dire effects, upon that element, where its aspect, always horrid, *is rendered still more horrible.* Fraught with the hopes of reaching some peaceful haven, far from the din of maddening strife, and human butchery, he encounters all the perils of the tremendous deep, and the fiercest fury of the contending elements combined. Escaped from all these, and now in sight of the wished-for asylum, man, his fellow man, armed as a li-

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censed spoiler, puts between him and the friendly port. And in one destructive hour, after butchering all who oppose him, in defence of their liberty and effects, drag him, if he should be unfortunate enough to survive the unequal contest, and his ruined family, to a strange country; where they are indeed free to—starve or beg. In this respect, humanity suffers more from *the privateers* fitted out by the contending parties in every war, than from *ships of the line*, on either side; for these seldom or never deviate from their course to chase any thing of less consequence as a mercantile prize, than a whole fleet of merchantmen. And even when captured, the authority of the commander is always sufficient to secure to the prisoners their clothes, and the little property they may have in their pockets, from the rapacity of the subaltern. But on board a privateer, every article taken must be brought to stock; nor has the captain a single prerogative of protecting a solitary dollar of a prisoner, no more than the pocket of the garment that holds it; all is legal plunder. And the share which

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falls to the crew of the whole twelvemonth's cruise, after all, is but a wretched compensation to the victors, for the loss of legs and arms, which so frequently happens in that desperate service; and to the truth of which, our streets echo with the cries of dozens of such mutilated heroes, begging their daily morsel.

As an instance of some of the miseries inseparable from this species of warfare occurs in the story of the beautiful Julia St. Prieux, and her unfortunate lover, the celebrated Flemish copyist, Rembrandt Glazetint, we shall here furnish our readers with a brief relation of it, as being one, not the least remarkable, in the history of nautical events.

HISTORY OF JULIA ST. PRIEUX.

JULIA ST. PRIEUX was the only daughter of a French officer, who served with credit under La Fayette, during part of the contest between Great Britain and her then colonies; and when that contest terminated, returned to a small patrimonial estate within nine leagues of ——————, there to eke out a slender competence,

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by an attention to agricultural improvements. So that he might acquire by his frugality and industry enough to place his darling child above the frowns of the fickle goddess, and enable her to move in that sphere to which her birth and numerous accomplishments so justly entitled her. Julia, who had been deprived of her amiable mother, ere she had attained her fourth year, which event had nearly deprived her father of his reason, and was the sole cause of his embarking for America, was placed under the immediate care of her father's sister. This excellent woman, who had chosen the monastic life from different motives than those which have too often added to the number of the devotees immured in such religious prisons, namely, disappointments in worldly concerns, particularly love, was prioress of a convent of nuns contiguous to the estate of her brother. The funds for the maintenance of this religious establishment being barely sufficient, a number of boarders were occasionally admitted, the price of whose education, and the laudable industry of the nuns, was just enough for those who looked forward to other enjoyments than those of the senses. In a word, few persons were so competent to the weighty and ardent task of instructing female youth, as the good prioress, who united every female virtue with the most sweetly engaging temper and manners, that endeared her to all the country round.

With this pattern of human excellence, the want of a parent was scarcely ever felt by her pretty little niece Julia; and the progress she made in all the useful and polite arts which distinguish the amiable sex, were pro-

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portionate to the expectations formed of her capacity, and the ability of her aunt. When, therefore, her father returned, it was no small share of consolation, after the fatigues of so many campaigns, and an absence of twelve years, to find the only object of his future hopes and care so completely mistress of every acquisition that render female worth more amiable. She, being then only in her sixteenth year, was perfect in music and dancing, and having obtained great proficiency in drawing, and several other polite accomplishments, was justly entitled to all the encomiums bestowed upon her by the best judges, amongst the professors of these polite arts.

Amongst the number of her teachers, none was more loud in her praise than the drawing-master, whose unremitting attention to his fair pupil certainly arose from more noble motives than any pecuniary consideration could have induced. And although the specimens of Julia's drawing, which he constantly exhibited to excite a spirit of emulation in his other pupils, were of considerable advantage to him, both in extending his reputation, and in increasing the number of his scholars, yet there was something so delightfully fascinating in conveying instruction to this favourite pupil, that he always exceeded the regular two hours, without perceiving any diminution of his interest from so many lessons extended beyond the usual time. Nor was his fair Julia less happy in the conversation and instruction of her drawing-master, and the most endearing hours she spent was in the charming study of the arts, under the auspices of

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such a teacher. This alluring intercourse had continued above a twelvemonth, without a single idea of any thing beyond the purest sentimental innocence, when Mr. Rembrandt Glazetint received a letter from some of his relations in Flanders, announcing the return of his patron, the hereditary prince of the illustrious house of Orange; and urging his return as soon as possible.

Now it was that the inexpressible something, which made the time glide away so imperceptibly sweet, began to assume a form and a name. He proceeds heavily to the apartments of his pupil; he approaches her with tremor; his looks are cast down, he sighs, and attempts to instruct, perhaps for the last time! That very thought embarrassed him so much, that his lovely pupil enquired with the most winning tenderness, if he was unwell? The poor teacher, perfectly a novice in the art of love, answered, with the utmost simplicity of truth, that he had never before experienced so much weight upon his spirits without being ill in his health, and that he really could not tell what cause to attribute his feelings to. He then related his having received a letter, and the necessity he was under of preparing for his journey homewards as soon as possible. And here again his utterance became indistinct.

But if there is such a power as sympathy, or rather, if any rational being doubts the existence of such a power in the human mind, the effect of this interview would have removed every doubt from the minds of the most sceptical. In fact, the tender Julia caught the con-

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tagion; and at the bare idea of a separation, became more affected than even her teacher. Her lovely neck and face alternately partook of the tints of the lily and the rose; and at certain intervals a deeper suffusion crimsoned her angelic countenance; and being a stranger to those perhaps necessary arts, which enable the sex to suppress those amiable emotions of sensibility which too frequently betray their attachment to the insidious traitor man, she let fall an involuntary tear. The situation of her master was embarrassing; and at this tender and evident proof of something more than esteem, he caught the lovely mourner in his arms, and for the first time embraced her with an ardour purely involuntary: he eagerly kissed off the pearly drops that distilled from the most beautifully languishing pair of black eyes, now teeming with sensibility; and for several of the most delicious moments, which none but those who have truly loved can ever feel, neither of these amiable novices in the art of love appeared conscious of the least impropriety. The noise of some footsteps along the passage, however, first apprised them of what the artifices of society have agreed to pronounce indecorous; and they separated from each other's chaste embrace, with a reluctance which nature, in her own cause, often exerts to shame and silence the mimic efforts of prudish and affected art.

This interview, which was to have been the last between the painter and his scholar, led the way to several others more explanatory of the cause of their regret

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at parting, though not more tender: and, in a very short time, these novices of the little blind urchin became so perfectly sensible of his power, that they vowed eternal constancy. And, upon the return of her master, it was agreed, that he should make proposals in form to her father, whose consent, if the lovers failed in obtaining, Julia vowed to accompany him to any part of the world, and there take him "for better or for worse."

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CHAP. XXI.

CONCLUSION OF THE STORY OF MADEMOISELLE JULIA ST. PRIEUX, AND REMBRANDT GLAZETINT, THE CELEBRATED FLEMISH COPYIST.

THE secrecy with which the lovers had for the last week of his stay conducted their meetings, owed its success to the good opinion the prioress had formed of the young painter, founded on the letters of recommendation which introduced him to all the families round that district. And for the first three or four months of the year he had been engaged to instruct her niece, as she had been a constant attendant upon every lesson during that time, she saw so little grounds for suspecting any thing like a growing attachment, that she seldom after that period was present more than five or six minutes during the remainder of his attendance. But of late she perceived such a disposition in her niece to be alone, when released from her studies, that for the first time led her to suspect her niece laboured with some secret which she did not think proper to confide in her. This piqued the good prioress so much, that, contrary to her usual practice, which was to inculcate an opinion in all her

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children, as she tenderly called them, that she had too much confidence in their good sense and virtue, to doubt for a moment the rectitude of their conduct; and therefore, as she was above suspicion, she could not stoop to the meanness of having their conduct watched. She was further induced to take this step, from several hints given her by the young lady who slept with her niece, whose acuteness of observation was considerably heightened by the little jealousy which had for some time past disturbed her own slumbers.

This pretty noviciate was about the same age of Julia, and had been also under the tuition of our handsome drawing-master; but having little capacity for that accomplishment, he signified to the prioress the little hopes he entertained of her ever making a proficiency in it adequate to the expence and consumption of time bestowed upon the trial. Now, although this young lady, who was really very pretty, and whose name was Adelaide, had no talents for the pencil, she was by no means destitute for those of intrigue; and nothing gave her so much chagrin, as to see the progress Julia made under a man whose merit she appeared not to have sense enough to appreciate. But, construing the marked attention he paid her, compared to any other of the young ladies whom he also taught, and her being at length suffered to remain alone with him for hours, during each lesson; she concluded, that although the indifference which appeared on Julia's part might be real, yet the attentions of the master were sufficiently marked on

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him, to give her the justest cause for both envy and jealousy.

Through the agency of this voluntary spy, the lovers were at length detected in a farewell embrace; for he was to depart for Flanders next morning by break of day; and the avowal of eternal constancy was reiterated with such tender emotions of real fervour, as could leave no doubt of the certainty and sincerity of a mutual passion.

This discovery was extremely distressing to the good prioress, who, between tenderness to her niece, and the faithful discharge of her duty, as well as a due regard to the feelings of her brother, became every way perplexed; and knowing the ambitious views long cherished in the breast of this brother, respecting the future disposal of her charge, she secretly regretted being made a witness to a scene that, in its consequences, must in all probability mar all the fine prospects so fondly entertained by this best of parents. Full of these cogitations, she remained silent to the most pathetic entreaties of the lovers, to pardon this stolen interview, which both protested, had nothing for its object but the most sincere and honourable declaration of an ardent but innocent passion.

As there was no great inequality respecting birth or situation, that presented any formidable obstacle to a union between these young people, the prioress had nothing to reply to the eloquence of their solicitude for pardon, except their making a secret of that, which, if

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as honourable as they wished to be believed, should have been submitted to the decision of the only person competent to sanction an engagement that would involve their happiness or misery for life; that as for her own part, although the whole tenor of her conduct to her niece ought to have entitled her to the most unlimited confidence, and whose natural interest in her welfare should have prompted Miss to an immediate disclosure of an event, in which she was so nearly concerned; yet waving all these circumstances, the breach of duty she had been guilty of in entering into an engagement which she could have no power yet to fulfil, being a minor, was what she could neither pardon, nor promise the least interference with her parent to excuse.

She next upbraided the lover with the insidiousness of his conduct; that, under the sanction of his professional duties, he should betray the trust reposed in him, and employ those moments of instruction to the treacherous purpose of stealing the affections of an innocent child, committed to his protection. Having uttered these reflections upon the drawing-master in a tone of affected severity; yet even that disguise, faint as it was, coming from a person unused to any but the gentle language of encouraging suavity, had such an effect upon the lovers, that they both remained dumb-founded; and poor Julia could only answer with a flood of tears, as she reluctantly followed the prioress to her apartment. As for the disconsolate artist, he withdrew from a spot, that was but a few moments before the scene of the most exquisite sentimental pleasure he had ever before experienced; and

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being commanded by the prioress never more to enter the walls of her sacred dwelling, he repaired immediately to his inn, and sitting down with pen, ink, and paper, drew a most affecting picture of his anxious mind; for the distress his passion was likely to involve her in, whose happiness was a thousand times more dear to him than his own; and vowing the most unalterable attachment.

This faithful portrait of his soul, he bribed one of the maids of the inn to deliver that night to his mistress; and the promise of a handsome reward in addition for any token she might bring back to certify the delivery. The person he employed very faithfully performed the commission entrusted to her management; and a little before midnight, brought him a small Morocco pocket-book, containing a miniature sketch of his lovely mistress, taken but a few days prior to their discovery and separation. Having liberally rewarded the messenger, he retired to his chamber, and kissed the resemblance of his beautiful Julia a thousand times; and throwing himself in his clothes upon the bed, cried over the sacred token, till the approach of day-light warned him of his necessary departure.

In a short time he arrived safe at his native place in Flanders, and after a few days spent among his relatives, set out for the Hague to wait upon his illustrious patron; where we shall take our leave of him for the present, and return to the disconsolate Julia St. Prieux, who was considerably relieved by the last consoling proof of her

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lover's attachment, and the manner of conveying it to her.

This amiable young creature, after undergoing several examinations, not the less trying to a person of her sensibility, for being conducted with all the tenderness and persuasive eloquence of a near relation, who had laboured hard to detach her from the snares of a connection not likely ever to be sanctioned by parental acquiescence. Every argument that a person of her description, whom the young lady must be conscious acted from no other motive than the most lively interest in her welfare and happiness, was urged to induce the tender-hearted Julia to promise her endeavours towards conquering a passion, the progress and issue of which must be attended with a thousand difficulties, and eventful remorse, which is a never-failing attendant upon the crime of disobedience. When the good prioress had sufficiently disciplined her niece with these and other moral lectures tending to shake her constancy in what the good lady thought an unjustifiable attachment; she intimated the necessity she would be under, if compelled thereto by her niece's obstinacy, of acquainting her father with the whole affair. This threat had a very considerable effect upon the young lady, and after an agony of mental distress, she threw herself at the knees of her dear aunt, and conjured her with all the fervency of a petitioning transgressor to delay the communication of her secret to her father, for at least a few weeks. This was at length promised, upon the sole condition of Julia's solemn word not to receive any letters in future, nor to hold any commu-

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pondence with her lover, directly or indirectly, but with the advice and privity of the prioress.

Matters being thus compromised, the mind of the young lady became more at ease; and a sort of religious tranquillity seemed to have absorbed every other idea; in fact, she was zealously devout in her attendance upon the duties as well as the ceremonies of religion; and her greatest consolation arose from the belief of her lover being under the protection and guidance of the holy Virgin power she constantly invoked for his welfare. From these and other favourable symptoms, the good prioress had erroneously calculated upon her recovery from the infatuation of a passion, which never having felt herself, she could but ill compute the powerful effects of. In short, after a visit which her father made her upon his return from Paris, where he had been for several weeks soliciting a commission upon the rupture between England and his own country, the good lady, his sister, from certain scruples of conscience, respecting the lawfulness of concealing from a parent what so nearly concerned the interests of his child, related the whole of Julia's unsanctioned attachment, and the object of it. But she had soon cause to regret this overstrained duty; for the veteran soldier, fraught with an idea of his noble blood being contaminated by any connection for his child lower than a gentleman by birth, gave way to such violence of passion upon the occasion, which appeared contrary to his nature, only because he had never before been threatened with such a stab to his vanity.

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The conduct of his sister, for suffering herself to be thus long imposed upon, was the subject of very ill-natured reflections, and terminated in his declaring she should no longer continue to shelter such disobedient meanness under her too indulgent roof. He next summoned his servants to bring his daughter immediately into his enraged presence; and the poor victim entered, trembling with the most fearful apprehensions at the altered looks and stern loudness of her father's voice. Having began his reproaches in the most violent terms of reprehension, the poor victim, no longer able to support such unusual harshness from a parent she idolized, sunk motionless at his feet. This awakened all the tender feelings of the man, and the father; he lifted her in his arms, chafed her temples, kissed her cold forehead, and betrayed every symptom of the most acute regret; calling on heaven and earth for assistance; till nature, after a severe conflict, obtained a complete victory over vanity.

After a considerable time, the terrified Julia was restored to her speech and senses, and the temper of her father's mind being, by this accident, somewhat softened, the arguments of the sister prevailed upon him to suffer her niece to remain a little longer under her direction. All confidence being now at an end, in consequence of the prioress having divulged her neice's secret, contrary to the good faith of her own engagement with the young lady, it is no wonder the latter availed herself of this breach of the articles, from the example set her from such high authority. She was the more confirmed in this resolution, by the frequent conferences which the brother

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and sister about this time began to have, and which she had every reason to suppose were held for the purpose of coming to some resolution respecting her future disposal. Her uncertainty, however, upon this head, was soon removed; when one morning her aunt desired she would prepare herself to receive the visit of a very respectable young gentleman, whose father had greatly forwarded her brother's application for a company of horse, by his interest at court.

It was in vain for the meek-spirited Julia to remonstrate upon this sudden and unexpected proof of parental authority; she obeyed with a seeming resignation to the will of those she ought to submit to without murmuring.

The young gentleman in point of personal advantages was much superior to her dear drawing-master; but his own opinion of these natural endowments was more than equal to the admiration he thought himself entitled to receive from the other sex. And this was what appeared to be the boundary of his mental exertion, for self-love and vanity seemed to exclude every other idea. No wonder then, that the interview between two persons so completely opposite in disposition, should be productive of nothing but indifference on his side, and contempt upon her's. And although his insufferable vanity impelled him to boast of a more than tolerable reception, from one so far gone in her ardent attachment to another, as her relations were perfectly apprised of; yet the report of this silly coxcomb so far imposed upon both

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father and aunt, that they flattered themselves with the hope of a successful issue.

Several irksome visits was the persecuted Julia obliged to sustain, without a single friend or confidant to console her for such daily mortification. It will not appear strange, then, if, thus circumstanced, she resolved to fulfil her engagement with her first love, who continued to evade the vigilance of all those who guarded the dwelling of his mistress; and, being well acquainted with every avenue in or about the priory, found means to attract the notice of Julia, in the disguise of a poor shipwrecked sailor, begging alms about the village.

Having interested the prioress by the story of his distress, when she had, in the presence of Julia, given him a small sum, he drew the pocket-book from his bosom, and when the prioress turned her back, exhibited the portrait to the astonished view of his fair pupil. She instantly recognised his voice, and, by his signs, understood what she was to expect that night; which was a letter conveyed to her by the messenger of the former. In this he claims the fulfilment of her solemn engagement—tells her he has been acquainted with all her sufferings upon his account, the disposition of her father and aunt towards him, and the utter impossibility of his being able to bring persons thus prejudiced to listen to the voice of reason: and, finally, he conjures her, by every tie of their sacred engagement, to fly to his arms at a certain hour; and, having described the certainty of her escape, by the means he had provided, tells her, his

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own brother, in a stout vessel, waits with impatience at the harbour of ————, to convey them to a port in Spain, where he has both friends and interest to support them in affluence. The messenger having returned to him with her answer, consenting to risk an escape from the persecution of his rival, and the tyranny of her relations, the painter and his friends succeeded in releasing her from the priory, and repairing to the inn, she equipped herself in a young sailor's clothes, provided for that purpose, and set off for ———— in a chaise and four, as fast as the horses could gallop with them.

Arriving safely at ———— harbour, they went on board the armed lugger Le Gerberae, carrying fourteen guns and one hundred and fifty-three men, commanded by the painter's brother, and bound for Cadiz, with a cargo principally of contraband articles. When, before they had been at sea ten hours, they were chased, and captured, after an obstinate resistance, in which the two brothers and the mate unfortunately lost their lives, in bravely defending their property; particularly the hard-fated painter, whose stake in the preservation of his dear Julia exceeded all the riches that have embroiled the world in blood and infamy, since their ill-timed discovery.

The situation of the beautiful survivor of his unhappy fate was more truly pitiable than those who were cut off in her defence; and she remained in a state of mental derangement, till the arrival of Captain Boardall with his prize in Liverpool, who had her conveyed to his mother's, in a pleasant retired mansion, ten miles from the

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town, where she is to remain until an answer arrives from her father and aunt, to whom she sometimes wishes to return. In short, the humanity of the British captain to this distracted beauty, reflects the highest credit upon the professional honour of our tars; and the delicacy observed by him in procuring a female, who was a native of France, to attend her ever since the first moment of her arrival in England, and committing her to the care of his mother, falls little short of the manly continence recorded of the generous and renowned Scipio.

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CHAP. XXII.

CONCLUSION OF THE ADVENTURES OF LADY B——, AND HER LOVER, CAPTAIN S—— ——SINGULAR GRATITUDE OF THEIR FRIEND, MR. CARMINE THE PORTRAIT-PAINTER—DEATH OF LAWYER BECKET —LADY B——'S AGREEABLE TRANSITION, FROM DEPENDENCE AND A PRISON, TO WEALTH AND LIBERTY, BY THAT EVENT—THE MELANCHOLY FATE WHICH SUCCEEDS THIS DREAM OF HAPPINESS, IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE LOSS OF HER FAVOURITE.

THE wretched vanity of keeping up appearances, even in a prison, was one of the greatest foibles of poor Lady B—— and her lover; and their regret at parting by degrees with every article of dress, to procure the means of existence, was never so

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keen, as when it deprived them of exciting the envy of their miserable fellow-prisoners, by their superior advantages in point of apparel. This temporary source of subsistence, however, was daily exhausting their stock, and the dreadful shock which their pride anticipated was now arrived, without the smallest hope or prospect of relief.

Their faithful friend, Carmine the painter, who had never, for a moment he could spare, forsaken them, continued for a length of time to supply them with nearly the whole of what his talents produced; which supplies, had they husbanded with common prudence, would have saved them the mortification that now seemed inevitable. But notwithstanding the improvident use they made of various sums, motives of the most generous delicacy prevented him from giving the smallest hint that might be construed into a censure of their profusion. Now, however, the crisis approached in which delicacy must be sacrificed to the emergencies of dire necessity; and as he

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had neglected his profession for some weeks, he was necessitated to flatter the vanity of all those who had still the means left to gratify that useful, at least in the present case, passion. In consequence of two or three successful efforts, every person, who had the sum of half-a-guinea, might have a fac simile of their darling features transferred to a moderate sized canvas *at one sitting*. By this means he acquired the reputation of being the best portrait-painter within or without the precincts of Banco Regis; and contrived to pick up five or six guineas every week for several months; the whole of which he most gratefully shared with his former benefactors; till an event occurred, which once more enabled Lady B—— and her lover to move in their former sphere of elegant and dissipated fashion.

This event was no other than a removal of old Lawyer Becket, the lady's father, from this world of litigation and trespass, to the courts above, where only his practice could be censured with effect. All

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the sums which this indefatigable solicitor had been scraping together for fifty years, by every *means* within the *verge of the law*, though several of these means were more infamously flagitious than what the same law has awarded a halter for, descended to Lady B——, his only daughter. Upon this unexpected reverse of persecuting fortune, the lovers gave a loose to all the boundless extravagance of their former notoriety; and out of sheer good nature and attachment, their friend the painter engaged in, and was carried away by the same vortex of wanton profusion. A severe indisposition which happened to the latter, in consequence of this mode of sacrificing time, rescued him from such worthless pursuits, and induced him to cultivate his talents to the utmost, which naturally produced a love for his profession, without which, no student ought to flatter himself with the least hope of success.

In consequence of the narrow escape which the painter had thus of his life, the lovers, to whom he was very dear, agreed,

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for the recovery of his health, to take an excursion to the Isle of Wight; and it being then about the middle of July, they set out for that delightful spot immediately. Having taken up their residence for the remainder of the season, Captain S—— bought a pretty sailing-boat, and for several weeks amused their favourite parties with little aquatic excursions all about the coast. In consequence of these pleasant coasting voyages the painter recovered surprisingly, and he was enabled to make several valuable sketches upon the ocean, which he afterwards introduced with great effect in the portraits of several of our admirals. This happy period of our party was extended by the divine disposer of all human events, till about the middle of October, when Captain S—— made unusual preparations for what he declared should be their last trip; as he meant to sell his sailing-boat, and remove to Bath, there with his party to remain till the spring of the next year. With some reluctance the painter consented; but the lowering hazy appearance

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of the morning determined Lady B—— and three other females to remain behind.

This determination of the ladies appeared to give the captain great displeasure, and he declared rather pettishly, that if Harriet would not go he should never forgive her. This determined Lady B——at once to relinquish her former intention; and as none of the other ladies could be prevailed upon, the captain, Mr. Carmine, Lady B——, and the chief mate of an Indiaman, whom our painter invited, being four in number, with two boys to attend, put off with what the mate called a stiff breeze. After scudding along under mainsail and jib for more than two hours, they took refreshment, and the captain was more than usually cheerful; sang several songs, and rallied his dear Harriet on her childish fears with great pleasantry. In the midst of all this good humour, however, a sudden gale of wind sprung up from the south-west, and before they could lower the mainsail, laid their small pleasure-boat deep gunnell under, when she instantly filled, and every one

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was left to contend with the merciless billows. Captain S——, who was an excellent swimmer, instantly darted forward, and rescued his beloved mistress from a tremendous wave which otherwise must have swallowed her up; and by his great strength and dexterity, was enabled to keep her above their fury for more than a quarter of an hour. The painter caught hold of an oar, and the mate, and the two boys, scrambled upon the bottom of the boat, which the waves had tossed about in that position. Their situation was now truly perilous; and the cries of one of the two boys, and the screams of Lady B——, were enough to pierce the most flinty bosom; when their wretched and deplorable situation was perceived by the crew of a sloop within half a mile of them. These humane sons of Neptune instantly manned their long-boat, and came time enough to save every one but the ill-fated captain, who, after he had just seen his Harriet safe, was about to make an effort to catch at the gunnell, when a swell took the boat athwart, and separated

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these fond lovers for ever. For after two or three faint attempts to catch at a rope they threw him, he sunk from their view and was never more seen!

The remainder of the party were taken on board the sloop, and, notwithstanding every exertion to recover Lady B——, she never spoke till they landed her at Cowes, when medical aid immediately attended, but only to restore her to a life worse than death. For after gazing wildly round her, she exclaimed, "Where—where have you banished my dear—dear—Charles?—Monsters of cursed ingratitude, you have thrown him overboard, to rob me of all that's dear in life—and tear from me my poor wearied senses." She then uttered several frantic screams, and fell lifeless on the floor; and upon her recovering her speech, gave such evident proofs of the loss of her reason, as induced the physicians to recommend two experienced persons to sit up with her. The event of a few hours fully justified their precaution; for after a

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long interval of quietness and seeming resignation, she stole softly from her bed, and flew to the window like lightning, which she threw up, and in another moment would have precipitated herself into the flagged area, had not the two nurses, by the utmost exertions of their united force, prevented her. In short, this unhappy beauty remained for several weeks, during which the painter visited her daily, till with heartfelt sorrow he saw her in a state that at length terminated in what is called melancholy madness, which is the most difficult case of insanity to remove.

After two years of ineffectual practice by the first abilities in the mental healing art, the poor, the lovely Lady B——, was given up by the physicians as a incurable but harmless maniac; and she was conveyed to a private receptacle for such melancholy inhabitants; where, within a very few years, she breathed her last sigh, under the same roof which still contains her ill-fated son-in-law, young Lord B——,

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who was to have been her husband, till her unlucky charms fascinated the heart of his noble father. The grateful Mr. Carmine, we believe, still lives, and but a few years since, was one of the first-rate artists upon the Continent.

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CHAP. XXIII.

MR. BIDFAIR ENTERS AN ACTION AGAINST THE PARTNERS IN THE NEW PICTURE FIRM—THEIR DETERMINATION TO ABIDE THE ISSUE, WHEN AN EXTRAORDINARY EVENT OCCASIONS AN ALTERATION IN THEIR OPINION, &c.

IN consequence of the captain's information respecting the pictures he sold to Mr. Bidfair, the price of which he most honourably deposited in the hands of his mother, together with every thing else which belonged to her, or her unfortunate lover, for the use of poor Julia, whenever she should be restored to her father, or chose otherwise to dispose of herself. We say, our Liverpool merchant being in possession of facts coming from such a quarter, was resolved to obtain possession of his property.

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And although an enemy to contention, and detesting litigation, he wrote directly to his attorney in London, to sue for the recovery of his picture, or the amount of the value he was determined to set upon it. The great men of the new firm were accordingly served with an action at law, and resolutely declared their intention of defending the same to the last guinea, and the last picture they had in the world.

Matters were thus proceeding rapidly to legal issue, each party flattering themselves with the successful termination of the cause, in favour of the justice of their respective claims; when an incident arose that settled the matter in a much less expensive and satisfactory manner. For one morning a foreign count was announced as a customer; and having just arrived from the Continent, the gentlemen of the new firm were extremely inquisitive respecting the state of the arts on that side the water. In less than an hour's conversation, this trio of intelligent foreigners became so well acquainted, that the im-

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portant law plea was brought upon the tapis; and the cause of it was immediately submitted to the inspection of the count. His surprise at the sight of this gem, and the extravagant grimaces which accompanied every syllable he uttered, induced the knight and his partner to believe he was suddenly bereft of his senses. At length, he told them, that the original picture, from the grand collection in Paris, had been once in his possession; that he had been plundered of it by the barbarous Prussian soldiers when in Holland, where he had been wounded and left for dead. In short, that his great uncle, the Elector of Saxony, had sent him to England, principally with a view to its recovery. That the Marquis of ————, near the Hague, had been obliged to fly, in consequence of the new revolution; and it was firmly believed, that some of the British troops had been successful enough to carry it off, with some other pictures of value, when they evacuated Holland. This conjecture was the more reasonable, as the French, with all their perseverance in the business

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of plunder, had certainly never yet been able to find the Guido, or seven others, which are to this hour missing, as well as that divine morceau.

The consequence of this, and subsequent arguments, determined the partners to instruct their solicitor forthwith to stay all further proceedings; and they wrote off directly a most humble apology to the Liverpool merchant, and sent him down his picture with it: promising to pay all the law expences which their own unreasonable obstinacy had thus foolishly incurred. But this was not the only service which the count promised to render the new firm; for in the event of a *peace*, which his natural sagacity enabled him to calculate upon with certainty in less than ten months, he agreed to take all their stock at a *certain price*. This *promise*, however, the count never fulfilled, for a better reason than he has ever yet assigned for the breach of a thousand others, namely, that the new firm refused to let their pictures go till the *price was paid*. This was considered as very

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ungenteel, by our noble count, who no doubt the reader hath recognised as the ci-devant Chevalier Vanderwigtie, who is determined to honour this envied country with his residence *as long* as he *possibly* can. Two other illustrious characters, who have come to the same laudable resolution, in consequence of receiving the *trifling* sum of five thousand guineas for a few airs, warbled at the Italian opera each season, are no other than Signor Timberani and his elegant signora, of whom we had occasion to treat in a former volume of these original Memoirs.

It is with infinite pleasure we relate, that the gallant Captain Boardall, after two years of the most respectful and delicate attention to the amiable Julia St. Prieux, had the inexpressible happiness of being united to her, with the entire approbation of her father, who still resides with one of the happiest families in Lancashire. The circumstances of which event were briefly these: Some time after the return of the picture to Liverpool, Captain Boardall set

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off on a cruizing trip; and on the fifteenth day after his departure, was so fortunate as to take a large ship richly laden, bound for Lisbon. On board this vessel was an elderly French gentleman, one of several passengers, who were making their escape from France with all their property, intending to settle in England. They, for the greater safety, meant to pass in a neutral vessel, belonging to Portugal, to some part of the British dominions. The settled melancholy of this gentleman could not be removed, although the generous Englishman told him, that all the property of individual passengers thus circumstanced was sacred; and it was some days before his countrymen, who knew enough of our language, could persuade him to unbosom himself. This, at length, he did, and the consequence of this disclosure of an overburthened mind to the poor gentleman, was one of the most pleasing reverses of fortune he had ever experienced.

We shall now take leave of such of our readers who may be inclined to doubt a

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few of our picture occurrences, by giving them a *recent instance* in proof of part of several *curious circumstances* we might here adduce in support of our narrative *.

With respect to the fate of our genuine and invaluable *gem*, the inimitable picture of the immortal *Guido*, and the principal subject of these Memoirs; we sincerely lament our inability to gratify the curiosity of our numerous readers or our own anxiety.

* In the King's Bench, Mr. Garrow described this as an action to recover the amount of a check given for pictures, and afterwards dishonoured. He said his client's mode of dealing was the fairest in the world, as he marked the price of every picture in large figures on the frames. Mr. Erskine complained of this mode of marking great prices upon worthless old pictures, as in the present case, since his client bought two of them at a 150 guineas, not worth the canvas and frames which contained such daubings. He was laughed at by his guests whom he had invited; and one of his pictures, called the *Wise Men's Offering*, was a knave's offering, and he wished his client had given it the *wise man's refusal*. The other picture was a view of a Square, and Mr. E. lamented that *this fair dealer had taken them in upon the square also*. But lamented the return of the check had checked him. Verdict for plaintiff.

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For, after the most indefatigable pains taken by us in the fruitless search, and every possible enquiry made amongst the *native* and *foreign adepts* in the *occult* science of *picturecraft*, we have not yet been able to *discover* the place *of its abode*. All, therefore, that now remains for us to do is, to offer up our most fervent prayers upon the altar of genius and taste, that *it* may be preserved from the *contaminating paws* of *ignorance* and *selfishness*; and above all, that *it* may never be doomed to fall into the merciless hands *of a butchering, botching despoiler of pictures*; and finally, that *these faithful records of its* pristine glory may escape the torturing ordeal *of prejudiced, of bigotted, and of pedantic criticism*; from which, and the envy and malice of our enemies, *good Lord deliver us*—Amen!

FINIS.

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